Book 5

Muharram

Project Booklet

Under the Guidance of Moulana Nabi R. Mir (Abidi)

Please recite a Sūrah al-Fātiḥah for
the sponsors of this project booklet.

Important dates in Muḥarram

2nd	Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) arrives in Karbalāʾ
7th	Water is restricted for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and his companions
9th	Night of ʿĀshūrāʾ
10th	Day of ʿĀshūrāʾ
12th	3rd day after martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and his companions
18th	Qiblah is changed from al-Quds to Kaʿbah
20th	Wafāt of Sayyidah Ruqayyah (Sakīnah), daughter of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)
25th	Shahādah of Imām Zaynul ʿĀbidīn (ʿa), son of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)

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who contributed to this booklet.

INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION:

NY Kids Crafts: Paper heart pocket craft
Kids Activities: Paper plate fish bowl craft
Wright Ideas with Susan: Prayer hands craft
Islam from the Start: Water bag craft

بِسۡمِ اللّٰہِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِیۡمِ

Salāmun ʿalaykum,

May Allah (swt) bless us, our families, and our communities.

Our sincerest condolences to the Imām of our time, Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj), our great marājiʿ and scholars, the Muslim ummah, and all the believers on the upcoming commemoration of Imām Ḥusayn's shahādah.

The onset of Muḥarram marks the beginning of the Islamic new year. While all other new years start with celebration and joy, our new year begins with mourning and sorrow in accordance with the tradition of our Prophets and Ahlul Bayt (ʿa). We commemorate the tragedy of Karbalāʾ each year with more grandeur than the previous year. Without a doubt, the months of Muḥarram and Ṣafar hold the same value to our faith as blood does to the human body.

Dear brothers and sisters, we must attend these majālis and live the next 10 days and nights as if we are in the presence of our 12th Imām (ʿaj). If the Imām (ʿaj) was with us today, and he is, what would our next 10 nights look like? I urge myself and all of you to keep the following points in mind:

1. The majālis and gatherings in our masājid and centers the next 10 nights are key elements for us to increase our educational and spiritual maʿrifah (deeper understanding) and baṣīrah (insight). As you attend majālis during these nights, think of it as attending a special course in the University of Ahlul Bayt (ʿa). This course is only offered once a year, so take advantage.

2. Knowledge needs an elixir in order for it to turn our souls and actions into God-intended actions. This elixir is ṭaharah (spiritual cleanliness). Let us remember Allah (swt) through the tears we shed. As we perform ṣalāh and recite Qurʾān, let us remember the ṣalāh Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) performed on the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ and the Qurʾān he recited from atop the spear. And let us purify our souls to reach that status of those who are sincere.

3. These nights should be used to strengthen our emotional connection to the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) and solidify our love for them. Let us become true muḥibbīn—lovers of the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa).

4. Let us direct our love and status of muḥibbīn to help us become muṭiʿīn—those who are obedient toward Allah (swt) and the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa). Let this love be the ignition of ʿamal aṣ-ṣāliḥ—pure actions.

With the above four points, let us become the true ambassadors of Islam and demonstrate this in the best possible way: through our akhlāq. As Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa) has narrated:

يا معشرالشيعة إنكم قد نُسبتم إلينا كونوا لنا زيناً ولا تكونوا علينا شينا

O Shīʿah! You are connected to us, so be ornaments for us, and do not be a disgrace for us.[1]

Brothers and sisters, to become true ambassadors of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and Islam, we need to take these 10 days as an opportunity for change. During these nights, let us have fruitful discussions where we reflect upon and discuss what we have learned from the lectures and majālis. Let's strengthen our relationship with our Creator and Nurturer. Let us answer our Creator when He calls us and establish our ṣalāh on time, the same ṣalāh that was so near and dear to our beloved Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa).

1 Shaykh Ṭabarsī, *Mishkāt al-Anwār fī Ghurar al-Akhbār*, Ch. 4, Ḥadīth #424.

Indeed, Muḥarram is the spring of flourishing our maʿrifah—deeper understanding—and spirituality. This month is full of important lessons on self building for everyone, men and women, old and young, Muslim and non-Muslim. Therefore, we all must take advantage of these two months and benefit from them to the best of our ability, especially our children.

We are honored to launch our Muḥarram Project Booklet, which includes speeches and lesson plans that have been put together in collaboration with scholars and educators. We must help our children nurture their Islamic identities and become ambassadors in this part of the world—and the first place this starts from is the family and masjid.

Pray for the Muslim ummah, and bring awareness to your children so they can prepare for the ẓuhūr of Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj). Talk to them about everything that is happening in the world, especially to our Muslim brothers and sisters and the children who are being oppressed all around the world in Palestine, Burma, Yemen, Syria, Kashmir, Bahrain, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, and everywhere else.

We pray that Allah (swt) gives us the tawfīq to actualize our duties and responsibilities.

With duʿās
Nabi R. Mir (Abidi)
Resident ʿĀlim of SABA Islamic Center

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Speech Structure & Guidelines

بِسمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ربِّ الْعَالَمينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلينَ اَبِى الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلى آلهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ اللَّه فِى الْاَرَضِين

Speech Structure

- Start with the duʿāʾ for the safety of Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj) (Duʿāʾ al-Faraj)
- Main speech
- Muṣībah
    - It's nice to turn off the lights and turn on a few lamps
    - Recite the salām to Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa):
    - Children usually repeat the last 4 lines
    - Recite the last 4 lines of the salām, 3 times, and dedicate them:
        1. in the hopes of manifesting the qualities we learnt about
        2. to our parents
        3. to the Imām of the time (ʿaj)

اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَيْكَ يَا ابَا عَبْدِ اللَّهِ
وَعَلَىٰ ٱلارْوَاحِ ٱلَّتِى حَلَّتْ بِفِنَائِكَ
عَلَيْكَ مِنِّى سَلاَمُ ٱللَّهِ ابَداً
مَا بَقِيتُ وَبَقِىَ ٱللَّيْلُ وَٱلنَّهَارُ
وَلاَ جَعَلَهُ ٱللَّهُ آخِرَ ٱلْعَهْدِ مِنِّى لِزِيَارَتِكُمْ
اَلسَّلاَمُ عَلَىٰ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ عَلِيِّ بْنِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اوْلاَدِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ
وَعَلَىٰ اصْحَابِ ٱلْحُسَيْنِ

- End with a few duʿās
    - "O Allah, please protect our *ʿulamāʾ* (scholars) and parents" (Say *ilāhī āmīn* and encourage kids to repeat, so it slowly becomes a habit)
    - "O Allah, please give us the strength to always make good choices" (*ilāhī āmīn*)
    - "O Allah, please help us to become the close friends and helpers of Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj)" (*ilāhī āmīn*)
    - "O Allah, please protect all the children around the world and give them food and shelter" (*ilāhī āmīn*)
    - "O Allah please hasten the reappearance of the Imām (ʿaj) so we can finally live as good Muslims in a safe world" (*ilāhī āmīn*)

Craft Materials

Here is a list of materials needed for the crafts. It includes Amazon links, in case the materials cannot be found at home or in a store:

- Pencils
- Crayons or colored pencils
- Markers
- Scissors
- Glue
- Tape
- Colored construction paper: https://www.tinyurl.com/msf2wmf4
- Paper plates: https://tinyurl.com/33kzpz3j
- Googly eyes: https://tinyurl.com/5n8zjsvb
- Stretchy string: https://tinyurl.com/yeywjvec
- Yarn: https://tinyurl.com/3vr7cm7f
- Popsicle stick: https://tinyurl.com/2hch6jcz
- Tissue paper (multiple colors): https://www.tinyurl.com/47e6w8tp

Speech 1: Flower of the Prophet

بِسمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ربِّ الْعَالَمينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلينَ اَبِى الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلى آلهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ اللّه فِى الْاَرَضِين

As we look around the room, we see that many of us are dressed in black and other dark colors because tonight is the first night of Muḥarram. For the next ten nights, we will come together to remember Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and the other shuhadā of Karbalāʾ. We remember the difficulties they faced and their great sacrifices, and cry for them. We also remember the many lessons they have taught us and inshāʾAllāh we hope to apply these lessons to our own lives so that we can become better Muslims.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa) once narrated from Rasūlullāh (ṣ):

الْوَلَدُ الصَّالِحُ رَيْحَانَةٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ قَسَمَهَا بَيْنَ عِبَادِهِ وَ إِنَّ رَيْحَانَتَيَّ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا الْحَسَنُ وَ الْحُسَيْنُ سَمَّيْتُهُمَا بِاسْمِ سِبْطَيْنِ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ شَبَّراً وَ شَبِيراً

A good child is a sweet-smelling flower that Allah has distributed among His servants. My two sweet-smelling flowers in this world are Ḥasan and Ḥusayn. I named both of them after the grandsons from the Banī Isrāʾīl, Shabbar and Shabīr.[1]

From this ḥadīth, we see that Rasūlullāh (ṣ) loved Imām Ḥasan (ʿa) and Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), so much that he called them "sweet-smelling flowers of Allah in this world." This means they were the most pleasant and lovely things in the world to him.

Flowers are known and admired for their beauty. Everyone loves flowers, whether looking at them from afar or keeping them in their homes. They spread beauty wherever they are and always smell sweet, even if they are crushed.

Imām Ḥasan (ʿa) and Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) are not just any flowers, the Prophet (ṣ) says they are flowers from Allah (swt). When someone we love gives us flowers, we not only appreciate the flowers, but also the person who gave them to us, as they are a sign of their love toward us. So, when we love Imām Ḥasan (ʿa) and Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), we should also be sure to thank and appreciate Allah (swt), who placed them on this earth to be our role models. By comparing Imām Ḥasan (ʿa) and Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) to flowers, the Prophet (ṣ) was showing us their great status. He wanted us to love and admire his grandsons just like he did, and to realize that they were very special blessings from Allah (swt).

Love of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) is the reward of prophethood

We might wonder why loving Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) is important and why we dedicate ten days—and even extend this period until Arbaʿīn—to his remembrance and mourning. Consider this: when someone gives you the best gift you've ever received, it's natural to want to thank them and perhaps give

1 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 6, Ḥadīth #1.

something in return. Islam is the greatest gift we've received, brought to us by Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ)! To show our gratitude and give something in return, we look at what the Noble Qurʾān says:

قُل لَّا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِى الْقُرْبَىٰ

Say [O Muḥammad], 'I do not ask you any reward for it except the love of [my] relatives.'[2]

No other Prophet asked for any reward in return for their hard work except Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ). Instead of asking for money or gifts, he asked for something invaluable: love for his close relatives, the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa), including Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). This request wasn't for the Prophet (ṣ) himself but actually for our benefit. Loving the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) is like giving a gift to ourselves because when you love someone, it brings you closer to them and inspires you to be like them. By increasing our love for them and learning about their lives, ʿinshāʾAllāh we can become more like them.

In Muḥarram, when we see how Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) is being remembered all around the world, we can see how Allah (swt) is granting this wish of the Prophet (ṣ). He fulfilled his request by instilling in the hearts of the people a great love for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). In fact, the amount of lovers grows every year. We see how people flock to Karbalāʾ every year on the day of Arbaʿīn in the millions, and this number grows year by year! Many of these lovers of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) walk to his shrine with their bare feet, some more than 100 miles, and more than 3 days, because of how much they love their dear Imām (ʿa). In fact, some of these people aren't even Shīʿah or Muslim! This shows us how Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) isn't just an inspiration for the Muslims, but an inspiration for all of mankind! For Muslims, he is more than an inspiration—he is a role model who is to be followed in all aspects of his life. And true love of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) means that we have to obey Allah (swt), because Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) was the perfect obedient servant of Allah (swt).

Being inspired by Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) isn't anything new. People have been remembering and mourning for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) since the beginning of time!

Who was the First Person who cried for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)?

According to ḥādīth, the first human who cried for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) in this world was Prophet Ādam (ʿa). When Prophet Ādam (ʿa) gazed upon the Throne of Allah (swt), he saw five names written on it. Angel Jibrāʾīl came and told him to call on Allah (swt) by these names, Muḥammad, ʿAlī, Fāṭimah, Ḥasan, and Ḥusayn. When Prophet Ādam (ʿa) reached the name Ḥusayn, sadness filled his heart and he began to shed tears.

Angel Jibrāʾīl informed him that this son would face a great calamity, a calamity that no one else will face. Prophet Ādam (ʿa) asked, "What is that calamity?" Angel Jibrāʾīl told him that he will be martyred, thirsty and alone, with a few companions. His thirst will be so severe that it will prevent him from seeing the sky. No one will help him, as even his family will be taken as prisoners. The enemies will slaughter him and his companions and take their heads to different cities. Then, Prophet Ādam (ʿa) and Angel Jibrāʾīl cried like mothers who have lost their children.[3]

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah ash-Shūrā (42), Verse 23.
3 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 44, P. 245.

The Prophets Mourning for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)

When Prophet Nūḥ (ʿa) was sailing the ark, he reached a land that did not allow his ark to move forward. That land was Karbalāʾ. Fearing that the ship would sink, Prophet Nūḥ (ʿa) prayed to Allah (swt) and mentioned that he has traveled all over the world and has never been in this type of situation. At this time, Angel Jibrāʾīl descended and explained the future of this land, Karbalāʾ. It would be the land that the grandson of the Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) would be martyred on by the most cursed of the seven heavens and seven worlds. At that moment, Prophet Nūḥ (ʿa) cursed the killers of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). Miraculously, the ark was released and reached a mountain top where Prophet Nūḥ (ʿa) and his followers were able to find safety, saving them from the flood.[4]

According to ḥadīth, there are many other stories of the prophets of Allah (swt) mourning for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), including Prophets Ibrāhīm (ʿa), Mūsā (ʿa), and ʿĪsā (ʿa).

Therefore, honoring the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) is a tradition of the prophets of Allah (swt). Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) is the sweet smelling flower and gift of Allah (swt) to Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ). We can take comfort knowing that our beloved Prophet (ṣ) is the first person that sees us come to such gatherings of mourning, and that perhaps he would say to us — if we come with the right intention — "You have come for my dear son Ḥusayn! I am pleased with you, and may Allah be pleased with you!"

Muṣībah:

The beautiful flower of Rasūlullāh (ṣ) arrived in Karbalāʾ along with his family and companions on the 2nd of Muḥarram. The army from the most wretched of this world prevented him from going forward and encircled him. They stopped him and his family from having water, the most basic need of any human. A flower that is not given water dries up, and its petals begin to fall.

After his loyal companions are all martyred, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) is left alone to defend Islam and the truth. It is here that Angel Jibrāʾīl had informed Prophet Ādam (ʿa) that Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) would cry out:

وَا عَطَشَاهْ وَا قِلَّةَ نَاصِرَاه

"O, the thirst! O the few number of helpers!"

With his extreme thirst, the exhaustion becomes so unbearable that Angel Jibrāʾīl tells Prophet Ādam (ʿa) that:

حَتَّى يَحُولَ الْعَطَشُ بَيْنَهُ وَ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ كَالدُّخَان ۔

The thirst will become a barrier between him. and the sky, like smoke.

How thirsty must Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) have been that he couldn't see the sky anymore! What did they do to the delightful flower of the Prophet (ṣ)?!

4 *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 44, P. 243.

It wasn't enough to let him die thirsty. No, the enemies of Islam encircled him. Our beloved Imām (ʿa) was left alone. No one answered his calls for help!

فلم يُجِبْهُ أَحَدٌ إِلَّا بِالسُّيُوفِ وَ شُرْبِ الْحُتُوف ۔

and no one came to help him unless with swords (against him) and to make him drink death

فَيُذْبَح ۔

and so he was slaughtered

This is the calamity that Angel Jibrāʾīl told Prophet Ādam (ʿa) about,

فَبَكَى آدَمُ وَ جَبْرَئِيلُ بُكَاءَ الثَّكْلَى ۔

and so Ādam and Jibrāʾīl cried (together) like mothers that have lost their children.[5]

Assalāmu ʿalayka yā Abā ʿAbdillāh!

5 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 44, P. 245.

Lesson 1: The Flower of the Prophet (ṣ)

Objective: Children will learn about the position of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), in the words of the Noble Prophet (ṣ).

Tonight is the 1st of Muḥarram. It marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar and the start of a month of profound sadness. It is when we commemorate the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), his family, and companions in Karbalāʾ. Over the next ten nights, we will reflect on these great personalities and the lessons we can learn from them.

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) was the son of Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) and Sayyidah Fāṭimah (ʿa), and the grandson of Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ). The Prophet's grandsons, Imām Ḥasan (ʿa) and Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), were very dear to him, and he always used to say, "Ḥusayn is from me, and I am from Ḥusayn."[1] The Prophet (ṣ) was deeply saddened by the foretelling of Imām Ḥusayn's martyrdom in Karbalāʾ, shedding tears upon hearing the news from Angel Jibrāʾīl. Thus, by mourning and crying for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), we are following the sunnah, or traditions, of the Prophet (ṣ). In another ḥadīth, the Prophet (ṣ) said, "A good and righteous boy is a sweet-smelling flower from Allah being sent to His servants, and my two aromatic flowers from this world are Ḥasan and Ḥusayn."[2]

Flowers bring beauty wherever they are, and make others happy. Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) is like a flower because he radiates beauty, goodness, and joy to all around him too! Today, we will make a special flower craft symbolic of Imām Ḥusayn's significance and the Prophet's boundless love for him.

1 Ibn Qulawayh, *Kāmil az-Zīyārah*, Ḥadīth #12.
2 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 6, Ḥadīth #1.

Flower of Goodness

Suggested Ages: 5+

Time: 40 minutes

Materials:

- Flower template
- Construction paper
- Crayons/colored pencils
- Scissors
- Glue
- Other decorating materials

Procedure:

1. Color and decorate the flower however you like.
2. Cut out the flower by cutting along the dotted lines. Put it aside for now.
3. Take the construction paper and fold in half widthwise.
4. At the folded edge, make two small, parallel cuts, about 1 inch long and 1 inch apart.
5. Open the paper and push the part inwards to create a small pop-up.
6. Glue the flower to the pop-up so it stands up when the paper is opened.
7. Finish decorating the craft however you like.

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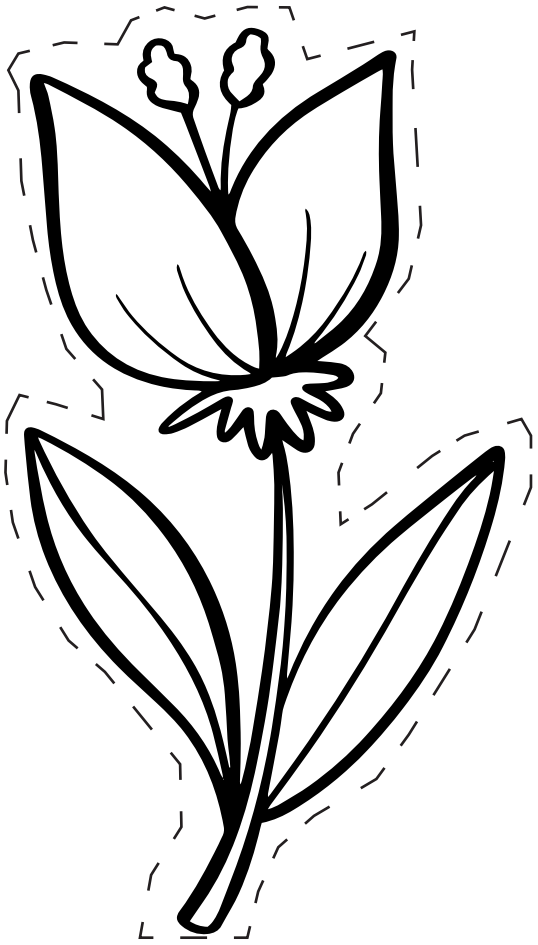

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Speech 2: Mourning For Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)

بِسمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ربِّ الْعَالَمينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلينَ اَبِى الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلى آلهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ اللَّه فِى الْاَرَضِين

One day, Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) told his great companion, Maytham at-Tammār, about the sad incident of Karbalāʾ which would take place many years later. The Imām (ʿa) informed Maytham that the Muslims would kill the grandson of the Prophet (ṣ) on the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, and that it would be a very sad day. He then told him that everything, including the wild beasts of the forests, the fish of the oceans, and the birds, would cry for his grandson.[1]

Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) told Maytham al-Tammār what would happen to his son, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), years before the event of Karbalāʾ took place. He also told him that the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) is so significant that the entire creation will cry for him, including the animals, fish, and birds.

All of Creation Glorifies and Praises Allah (swt)

For us to be able to better understand how different creations, such as animals, can cry for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), we must first understand that every object in this world has the ability to praise and glorify Allah (swt). Glorification is praising and admiring something for how great it is. So when we praise Allah (swt), we are glorifying Him and stating all of His perfect qualities, as well as saying that He is free of all negative qualities. But, humans are not the only ones who praise and glorify Allah (swt)! There are many verses in the Noble Qurʾān that tell us how everything on this earth praises and glorifies Allah (swt), such as:

سَبِّحُ لِلَّـهِ مَا فِى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِى الْأَرْضِ

Everything that is in the heavens and on the earth glorifies Allah.[2]

In Sūrah al-Anbiyāʾ, we learn that the mountains and birds remember and glorify Allah:

وَسَخَّرْنَا مَعَ دَاوُودَ الْجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحْنَ وَالطَّيْرَ

And We commanded the mountains to glorify [Us], along with Prophet Dāwūd and the birds.[3]

All of Allah's creations have a basic understanding. Although we don't hear them glorify Allah (swt) and can't understand what the birds and animals are saying, they know and understand that Allah (swt) is the One who created them, and they all thank and glorify Him for all of His blessings. The Noble Qurʾān says:

1 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *ʿIlal ash-Sharāʾiʿ*, Vol. 1, P. 228.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Jumuʿah (62), Verse 1.
3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anbiyāʾ (21), Verse 79.

تُسَبِّحُ لَهُ السَّمَاوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَن فِيهِنَّ ۚ وَإِن مِّن شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَٰكِن لَّا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ ۗ

The seven heavens and the earth and whatever is in them glorify Him. And there is not a thing except that it glorifies [Allah] with His praise, but you do not understand their [way of] glorifying.[4]

Mourning for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) is Allah's Glorification

Now that we've learned that all creations praise and glorify Allah (swt), how does this relate to their mourning for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)? You see, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) was trying to get everyone to be on the true path and lead them closer to Allah (swt). He was trying to teach people what is right and wrong.

When the animals saw how the people killed Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) rather than listen to him, they cried because they knew these people were not following Allah's message. When we cry and mourn, we are joining the rest of creation, like the birds in the sky and the fish in the sea, who are also mourning for the Imām (ʿa).

Mourning for and feeling sad for what happened to our beloved Imām (ʿa) is a way of glorifying Allah (swt) and worshiping Him. Crying over the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) to get closer to Allah (swt) is the worship itself. This is similar to other actions that we perform, like reading the Qurʾān or being kind to our parents, as those different actions bring us closer to Allah (swt). As Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa) has said, "The sigh of a sad person who is mourning on our account is a form of tasbīḥ."[5]

Therefore, crying for the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) and performing their ziyārah is a form of tasbīḥ and glorification, and this brings us closer to Allah (swt), as these are actions that He has encouraged us to do. Surely, following Allah's advice would bring us closer to Him.

At the same time, it is important that we don't confuse crying for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) with worshiping him. We don't worship the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa), because this would be shirk, which means worshiping something other than Allah (swt).

Muṣībah:

We discussed how all of creation, including animals, cried for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). But no animal loved and cried for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) as much as his horse, Dhul Janāḥ.

Many scholars have narrated the returning of Dhul Janāḥ to the tents in this way. When Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) fell down from his horse and was martyred, his horse came neighing near the body of the Imām (a) and kissed his holy body and smelled his body, while it was crying. Dhul Janāḥ stained his mane with the Imām's blood and came back to the tents with his saddle hanging upside down, neighing and tapping his head against the earth around the tents.

4 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Isrāʾ (17), Verse 44.
5 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 72, P. 83

Upon hearing the neigh of the horse, Lady Zaynab said to Sakīnah, “I think your father has come back and he has brought water. Go and welcome him!” But when Sakīnah came out and saw the horse, she shouted “O Father! O Ḥusayn!” It has been narrated in Ziyārat Nāḥiyah, which has been passed to us from Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj), “When the women and daughters saw the horse with its saddle has been upside down, all of them cried out as they hit their faces and despite their great honor, now they had to be captured by the enemy after the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn, so they wailed and ran toward the place of the Imām’s martyrdom.”

Lady Zaynab then called out, “O ʿUmar ibn Saʿd! They are killing my brother, while you are watching?” ʿUmar ibn Saʿd didn’t answer. Imām ʿAlī’s daughter turned to the soldiers of the enemy and said “Woe to you! Are there any Muslims amongst you?!” Again, no one answered her. Shimr called the soldiers and told them, “May your mother cry for you! What are you doing? What are you waiting for?” Then they rushed from every direction and attacked the body of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) with arrows, lances and swords.

Assalāmu ʿalayka yā Abā ʿAbdillāh!

Lesson 2: Mourning & Majālis

Objective: Children will learn how mourning for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) is a tradition amongst all of Allah's creations.

Last night we learned that the Prophet (ṣ) mourned for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) too. In fact, ḥādīth say all Prophets (ʿa) mourn for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). Many Prophets, like Mūsā (ʿa), Nūḥ (ʿa), and Ibrāhīm (ʿa), passed through the land of Karbalāʾ and felt sadness. When Allah (swt) told them the story of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), they cried and mourned for him. Today, when we remember Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and the martyrs of Karbalāʾ, we have a gathering called a majlis. Although a majlis means any gathering, we use it to refer to a gathering where we remember the tragedy of Karbalāʾ, learn about Allah (swt) and Islam, and remember the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa).

Majālis are held worldwide to remember the Imām (ʿa), how he saved Islam, and learn from his sacrifice. Without the Imām's sacrifice in Karbalāʾ, we would not have truth and guidance, and Islam would have been lost. For this reason, we honor and thank him. Even the animals mourn for him! They also understand the greatness of his sacrifice, and show their love and respect for the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa).

Once, a companion of Imām Jaʿfar aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa) was seated in the house of the Imām (ʿa) when he saw a pigeon humming a lot. The Imām (ʿa) looked towards his companion and asked, "Do you know what this bird is saying?" His companion said no. Then, the Imām (a) said, "It is asking Allah to withhold His mercy from the killers of Imām Ḥusayn. It is good to keep these birds in your homes [as pets]."[1] Today, we will make our own birds to remind ourselves that all living things remember and mourn (ʿa).

1 Ibn Qulawayh, *Kāmil az-Zīyārah*

Bird Craft

Suggested Ages: 5+

Time: 40 minutes

Materials:

- Pigeon template
- Crayons/colored pencils
- Scissors
- Glue
- Googly eyes

Procedure:

1. Color and decorate pieces of the bird template however you like.
2. Cut out all of the pieces by cutting along the dotted lines (optional: you can cut out the pieces from construction paper instead).
3. Glue the google eye and the small triangle to the smaller circle to make a bird's face.
4. Fold the bigger circle and fold it in half along the solid line. The 2 squares should be showing.
5. Glue the bird face to one end of the folded circle.
6. With the circle still folded, carefully poke a hole at the square, making sure it goes through both sides.
7. Take the two rectangles and fold them back and forth like an accordion, starting at the solid line.
8. Slide the bigger rectangle through the hole while it is still folded. Spread out the folds to make the wings.
9. Glue the smaller folded rectangle to the opposite end of the folded circle, opposite the face, to make the tail. Spread out the fold.
10. Finish decorating the bird craft however you like!

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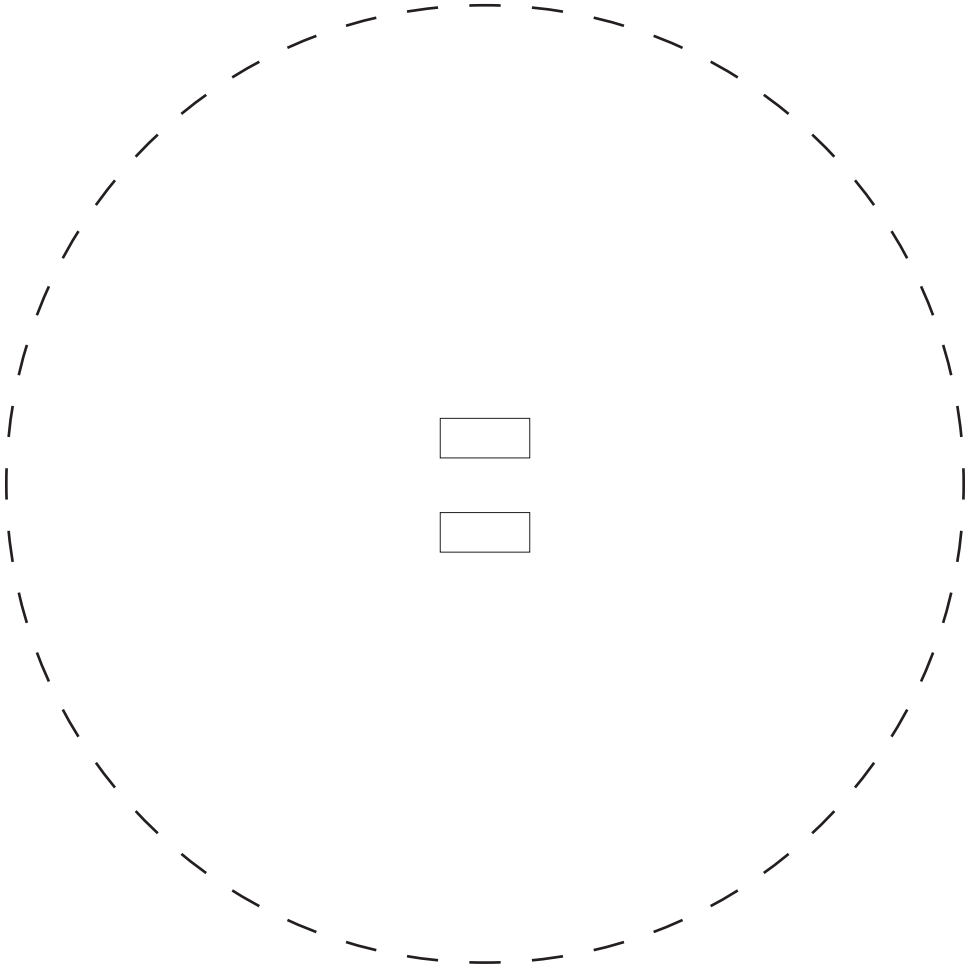

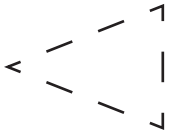

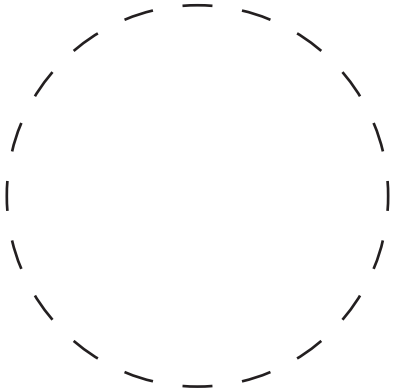

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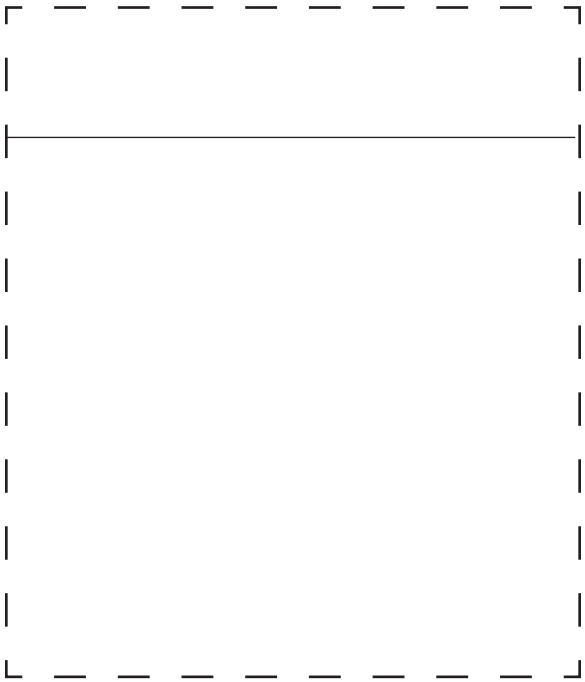


shorter rectangle = tail

longer rectangle = wings

Speech 3: Īmān

بِسمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ربِّ الْعَالَمينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلينَ اَبِى الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلى آلهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ اللّه فِى الْاَرَضِين

Alḥamdulillāh, we have gathered another night to remember and mourn our beloved Master, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). From the life of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), we can learn many examples. One of these examples is the importance of having īmān, or belief. Īmān is more than just believing in the Uṣūl ad-Dīn (Roots of Islam), although this is also important. In addition to simply believing with our hearts and minds, we need to live our lives according to these beliefs. Our actions should reflect our beliefs, which means we make good choices and stay away from bad ones. Having true belief is not always easy. Sometimes, it means making hard choices, because we know they are right.

Always Choosing the Truth

One of the best ways for us to see how much īmān we have is by looking at the decisions that we make. When we are put in a difficult situation, that is when we are tested and our true īmān and belief shines through.

Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa) once said:

إنّ مِن حقيقةِ الْإيمانِ أنْ تُؤْثِرَ الحقَّ وإنْ ضَرَّكَ علَى الباطلِ وإنْ نَفَعَك

Surely, true belief is for you to prefer the truth that hurts you over falsehood that benefits you.[1]

In this ḥadīth, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa) teaches us that true belief is seen when one has to choose between truth and falsehood, right and wong. Of course, it can sometimes be harder to choose the right path. However, our īmān and belief becomes stronger when we learn more and increase our understanding. When we act on what we know, and make good choices, our belief grows stronger and stronger. The greater the test we pass, the more our inner belief shines bright like a light when we make the right decision.

Karbalāʾ is the greatest display of truth and falsehood. It is the reason that Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) rose up against the oppressor of his time. He has said:

اَلا تَرَوْنَ اِلَى الْحَقِّ لا يُعْمَلُ بِهِ وَ اِلَى الْباطِلِ لا يُتَناهى عَنْهُ

Don't you see that the truth is not followed and the falsehood is not discouraged?[2]

Karbalāʾ was the fight between truth and falsehood. But doing what was right meant that Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) would have to give up everything. It meant giving up his own life, his children, his loyal companions, and knowing that his family would be taken as captives. That is why Karbalāʾ was the greatest test, but also the greatest display of true belief and conviction.

1 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* P. 106, Ḥadīth #2.
2 Al-Ḥarrānī, Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī, *Tuḥaf al-ʿUqūl,* P. 245.

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and his companions passed their tests with flying colors. This is because people with īmān are the strongest of people during tough times.

Imām al-Bāqir (ʿa) has said:

المؤمنُ أصْلَبُ مِن الجَبلِ ۞ الجَبلُ يُسْتَقَلُّ مِنه ۞ والمؤمنُ لا يُسْتَقَلُّ مِن دِينِه شَيءٌ

The believer is firmer than a mountain, for the mountain can crumble, but nothing can separate the believer from his religion."[3]

In another ḥadīth, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa) has said:

إنّ المؤمنَ أشدُّ مِن زُبَرِ الحديدِ ۞ إنّ زُبرَ الحديدِ إذا دَخلَ النّار تَغيّرَ ۞ وإنّ المؤمنَ لو قُتِلَ ثُمّ نُشِرَ ثُمّ قُتِلَ لم يَتغيّرْ قلبُهُ

Surely, the believer is stronger than pieces of iron, for when a piece of iron enters the fire, it changes, but even if a believer were to be killed, then brought back to life, and then killed again, his heart would never change."[4]

Īmān in Hardships

We will all face hard tests in our lives — it is the nature of life. The Noble Qurʾān clearly outlines that we will be given tests in life so that:

وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللَّـهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَلِيُمَحِّصَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَاللَّـهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

Allah may test what is in your chests, and that He may purge what is in your hearts, and Allah knows well what is in the chests.[5]

So, one thing we know for sure is that life will have its ups and downs. What is important is how we react to these tests. This is where our true īmān shines through. When things work in our favor and are going well, we should be grateful and thank Allah (swt), and when they don't, we should be patient and still thank Allah (swt).

Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) has said:

المؤمنُ شاكرٌ فى السَّرّاءِ ۞ صابرٌ فى البلاءِ ۞ خائفٌ فى الرَّخاءِ

The believer is grateful in times of prosperity, patient during hardships, and fearful in times of ease.[6]

We can gather from this ḥadīth that someone who has īmān, a believer, is patient even when life becomes difficult.

3 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, P. 241, Ḥadīth #37.
4 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, Vol. 67, P. 303, Ḥadīth #34.
5 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 154.
6 Āmidī, Abul Fatḥ, *Ghurar al-Ḥikam*, Ḥadīth #1743.

Controlling Our Anger

Another sign of īmān is controlling our anger. Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) has said, "Indeed the patience of the patient [person] is recognized at the time of his anger."[7] This means that having patience when we get angry is especially important. We should be careful about controlling our anger and channel it in the proper way. If we become angry, we should not do something that we know is wrong, like yell at others, such as our friends, and especially not our parents.

Testing Our Own Belief

Therefore, if we want to check our level of īmān, we should use this measure taught to us by Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa). We should test our commitment to choosing right over wrong in our daily lives. How much commitment we have to standing for the truth and doing the right thing shows the amount of īmān and belief we have.

Doing what is right means for us to follow the instructions that Allah (swt) has given us. This means either completing our duties and responsibilities towards Him, such as obeying the ḥalāl and ḥarām, or completing our responsibilities towards His creation, such as being respectful to our parents or other Muslims. For example, if our parents tell us to use the computer only for homework right now, it is our responsibility to stay away from playing games and follow their instructions, even when they aren't watching. Similarly, on the playground, if friends are excluding someone from playing, it is our duty to stand up for the excluded person.

We pray that Allah (swt) gives us all the tawfīq to strengthen our īmān and become strong believers like Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and his beloved family and companions.

Muṣībah:

Imām Ḥusayn's patience on the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ reflected his indescribable belief and trust in Allah (swt). We read in Ziyārat Nāḥiyah that his patience shocked the angels. The same angels who complained to Allah (swt) when Prophet Ādam (ʿa) was created were now amazed at what the son of Ādam (ʿa) endured and how he responded to it. As we say in Ziyārat Nāḥiyah:

قَدْ عَجِبَتْ مِنْ صَبْرِكَ مَلائِكَةُ السَّماواتِ

Indeed, the angels of the heavens were astonished by your patience.

It was at this moment, when Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) was surrounded by enemies from all sides, weakened by wounds, that he would display his true belief in Allah (swt).

7 *Nahj al-Balāghah,* Ḥadīth #193.

He was all alone:

وَ لَمْ يَبْقَ لَكَ ناصِرٌ

And you had no helper remaining.

وَ أَنْتَ مُحْتَسِبٌ صابِرٌ

You were bereaved, yet patient.

But the test of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) did not only include the difficulties that he himself went through. The true hardship of a man is when he knows that the enemies will hurt his family and he cannot do anything to stop them.

The sweat of death appeared on Imām Ḥusayn's forehead and he continually clenched and unclenched his hands. The Imām of our time (ʿaj) describes the situation as follows, addressing his grandfather Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa):

تُديرُ طَرْفاً خَفِيّاً إلى رَحْلِكَ وَ بَيْتِكَ

You were secretly gazing upon your caravan and tents,

وَ قَدْ شُغِلْتَ بِنَفْسِكَ عَنْ وُلْدِكَ وَ أهاليكَ

while busy defending yourself and unable to be with your children and family.

O Ḥusayn (ʿa), what hardships you went through, and yet you remained patient! Surely, in this great hardship, there is an example of true belief for all of us followers of Ḥusayn (ʿa).

Assalāmu ʿalayka yā Abā ʿAbdillāh!

Lesson 3: Strengthening Faith

Objective: Children will learn about strengthening our faith through our actions.

Over the last two nights, we've learned some reasons why we remember, such as for his sacrifices and dedication to Islam. Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and his army were able to give up their lives for Allah (swt) because of their strong īmān, meaning faith, in Allah (swt) and the religion of Islam. Faith is what we believe in, like Allah (swt), the Prophets (ʿa), the Imāms (ʿa), the Noble Qurʾān, and the Day of Judgment. These beliefs are part of Islam, and our faith gives us strength to make good choices and do good deeds.

Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) has said, "īmān is belief with the heart, acknowledgement with the tongue, and action with the limbs."[1] Having faith is more than just what we believe in our hearts; it is shown in our words and actions. Our īmān becomes stronger when we learn about Islam, do good deeds, and avoid bad deeds. The stronger our faith, the more good actions we can perform, which in turn strengthens our faith even more.

We can strengthen our faith or īmān by reading the Qurʾān and performing actions that Allah (swt) has made wājib, like praying ṣalāh. Remembering and mourning Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) also strengthens our faith. As we learn and cry for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), our faith grows stronger. Today, we will make a puzzle to show us the different parts of faith and strong belief.

1 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Ḥadīth #227.

Faith Puzzle

Suggested Ages: 5+

Time: 40 minutes

Materials:

- Puzzle template
- Construction paper
- Crayons/colored pencils
- Scissors
- Glue

Procedure:

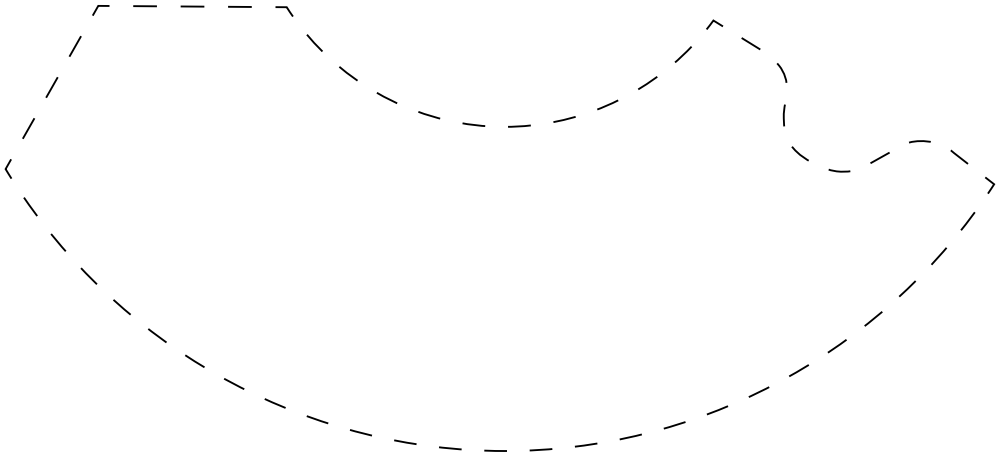
1. Color and decorate the puzzle pieces however you like.
2. Cut out all of the pieces by cutting along the dotted lines.
3. Arrange the puzzle pieces on the construction paper, with the circle that says "Faith" in the middle.
4. Once you have all the pieces in the correct places, glue them down to the paper.
5. Cut out the word boxes. Glue each one in each puzzle.
6. Finish decorating the craft however you like.

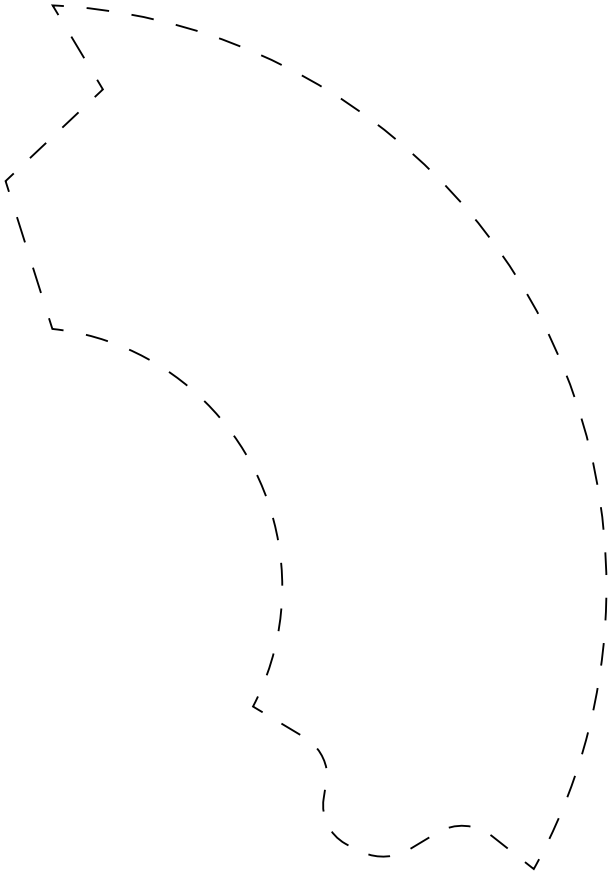
belief with the heart

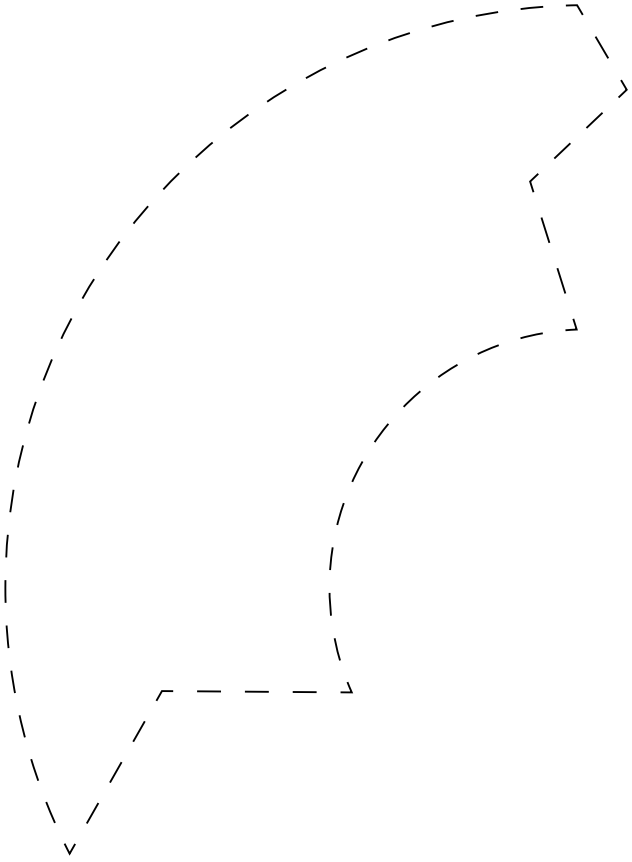
acknowledgement with the tongue

action with the limbs

Faith







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Speech 4: Living the Life of the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa)

بِسمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ربِّ الْعَالَمينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلينَ اَبِى الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلى آلهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ اللهِ فِى الْاَرَضِين

We thank Allah (swt) for giving us the opportunity to come tonight to the majlis of our beloved Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). During these nights, we recite a beautiful ziyārah known as Ziyārat ʿĀshūrāʾ, in which we read this statement:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اْجعَلْ مَحْيَایَ مَحْيَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

O Allah, make my life the life of Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad.

Naturally, when we hear those lines, we reflect on the life of Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) and think of why we should mirror his way of living. The Noble Qurʾān can help provide an answer for us.

The Best Role Models

A beautiful verse in the Noble Qurʾān states, "The Messenger of Allah, the Noble Prophet of Islam, is a perfect role model for you."[1] We have a lot of role models in our lives. Many people we love influence us, and we want to be like them. This includes our friends, family, and teachers. Sometimes, we end up talking, walking, or acting like them. Among all of these people, our parents love us the most, making them perhaps our biggest role models.

The Noble Prophet (ṣ) said, "ʿAlī and I are the fathers of this nation."[2] In our time, Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj), is the father of this nation which means that the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) love us the most and are our greatest role models. We should most want to be like them and to do so, we have to understand how they lived their lives. By learning about the life of the Noble Prophet (ṣ) and the good things he did, we can look up to him and try to mirror his actions and life.

For example, when Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) spoke to people, everyone thought the Prophet (ṣ) was their best friend and felt heard. He would face them by turning his body completely toward them, giving them a feeling of one-on-one attention. He would be kind to mean people, patient with everyone, and he would not raise his voice at others rudely. One way we can live the life of Muḥammad (ṣ) is by trying to be kind when we talk to others. We should try to use a nice voice and tone. When we speak with our friends, siblings, and parents, we should spend an extra minute considering what we are saying so that kindness comes out of our mouths.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Aḥzāb (33), Verse 21.
2 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār,* Vol. 16, P. 95.

Examining the life of Imām ʿAlī (ʿa), we see that even though he was known for his bravery on the battlefield, he was also extremely gentle and kind to the orphans. He would spend time with and play with them so they wouldn't feel lonely. This is what it means to live our lives like the Prophet (ṣ) and his family—being strong in the face of injustice, yet trying to help those who need help. This is the way that Allah (swt) wants us to live.

We can look at each of the lives of the 14 Maʿṣūmīn as examples of how to live our lives. Imām Ḥasan (ʿa) was known for being generous. We can live our lives like him by sharing things with friends and siblings or donating to those in need, like the poor and orphans.

When we look at the life of Imām as-Sajjād (ʿa), we see that he was known for the way he prayed and worshiped Allah (swt). He prayed with passion and attention. We should try to pray like him and present our needs to Allah (swt) by making a lot of duʿāʾ. Then, there's Imām al-Bāqir (ʿa), known for spreading knowledge. Living the life of the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) means trying our best to learn and do well in school to be successful in our studies. Our 6th Imām, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa), was an excellent teacher. We can learn from him by teaching others, whether in helping classmates or siblings. Then, there's Imām al-Kāẓim (ʿa), who was known for controlling his anger. When we get angry, we should try to control our anger and not lash out against others. Imām ar-Riḍā (ʿa) was given the title Imām ar-Raʾūf, the kind Imām. This was because he was kind to everyone, just as we should also be.

Imām al-Jawād (ʿa), Imām al-Hādī (ʿa), Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī (ʿa), and Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj), are all our role models, which means that we try to live like them and try to be like them.

Having Taqwā

Being like the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) ultimately means that we try our best to do good deeds and avoid bad deeds, just as they did. We are careful about the ḥarām and ḥalāl.

Whatever Allah (swt) has said not to do, we don't do it. Whatever Allah (swt) says is ḥalāl and allowed, we say it's ḥalāl, and whatever Allah (swt) says is ḥarām, we say it's ḥarām. This is what it means to live like the life of Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ): to live a life remembering Allah (swt), and thanking Him for everything He has given us by following the rules He has given us.

Following the rules of Allah (swt) means that we remember that Allah (swt) is always watching over us. If we remember that He is watching and are aware of Him, we have taqwā. Imagine if there is a camera at school, which is always monitoring us. If we knew this, we would be careful of our actions, because we know that our teacher or principal is watching. Well, we know Allah (swt) is always watching, so this should change how we behave every single day.

Now, what if someone says, "Well hey, wait up, if I always have to be careful about what I do, then it's like I'm in jail! What if I don't like being told what I can and can't do?!" Having taqwā, being God-conscious and aware of Allah (swt), like the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa), protects us rather than limits us. It's like we're building a fortress around ourselves. There is a difference between being in jail and being in a fortress. When you put yourself in a fortress, you are willingly secluding yourself. But to be in jail means you are locked in. The jail is locked from the outside, but a fortress is locked from the inside, meaning when you are in a fortress, you lock it because you don't want the enemies to come in.

Taqwā is locking the fortress so that shayṭān cannot get in. It helps us to gain Allah's protection for ourselves, which is why when you look at the lives of Ahlul Bayt (ʿa), you see they had so much of it. It is a tool that can bring us closer toward living a pure life that is full with the remembrance of Allah (swt). We want to be God-conscious people like them as well. May Allah (swt) help all of us to live a life like the life of Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) and the family of Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ).

Muṣībah:

On the night of ʿĀshūrāʾ, there were so many people who were with Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), but when they realized that the next day there would be a battle, many of them left. Only a few of the Imām's companions stayed, knowing that they would be killed tomorrow. There were young and old, and even some who had recently accepted Islam, like Wahb. There were even people from different races and skin colors, and among them was an old man known as John.

John used to serve Abū Dharr, a companion of the Noble Prophet (ṣ), and he was sent as a gift from Abū Dharr to the household of Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) and Sayyidah Fāṭimah (ʿa). In the company of Imām ʿAlī (ʿa), he learned the tafsīr of the Qurʾān, the ḥadīth of the Noble Prophet (ṣ), and he memorized the entire Qurʾān. When Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) was martyred, John stayed with Imām Ḥasan (ʿa), and after Imām Ḥasan's shahādah, he stayed with Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). John was blessed to be with three Imāms (ʿa) and stood by the side of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) on the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ—what a lucky and blessed man!

On the night of ʿĀshūrāʾ, John spent the whole night sharpening his sword while reciting the Noble Qurʾān.

When the battle of Karbalāʾ started, the Imām's friends took permission, one by one, to go to the battlefield and become shahīd. Finally, John went to Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and stood silently with his arms folded. Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) looked at John and said, "John, my friend, what is the matter?"

John replied, "My master, I cannot bear to see any more suffering, I cannot bear to see the children of Sayyidah Fāṭimah get killed in front of me. Please, Master, allow me to go to the battlefield."

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) looked at John and said, "You are an old man; you don't have to go and fight." But John was determined to get permission, saying, "Master, I know why you're not letting me go to the battlefield. Is it because I am only a servant?"

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) was deeply shocked and upset to hear this. He comforted John, saying, "John, my friend, do not say that! You know that we, the Ahlul Bayt do not see such differences. Go, John, may Allah be with you."

John went to the battlefield and fought bravely. Although he was an old man, he still fought hard with great determination Perhaps while fighting, he remembered how the Prophet (ṣ) used to nurse Imām Ḥusayn's injuries. He might have recalled the day when Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) climbed on the Prophet's back while he was praying ṣalāh. Maybe he remembered his time with Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) and Imām Ḥasan (ʿa), and his eyes were full of tears.

Finally, he was attacked with arrows from all directions, falling to the ground. As he fell from his horse, he cried out, “O my master, my salām and peace and blessings to you, please come to see me! Let me see your face one last time!” Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) heard John calling him and rushed to the battlefield. As Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) hugged and kissed him, John’s soul was taken to heaven.

John is a good example of those who live a life like the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa). In his region today, Africa, there are many people like John. Look at the people in Nigeria, such as Shaykh Zakzaky, who has inspired many to become followers of the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) and who stand up against modern-day oppressors. Shaykh Zakzaky is a good example of a person who has lived the life of Muḥammad and Āl Muḥammad, just like John. We ask Allah (swt) to make all of us true followers of Muḥammad and Āl Muḥammad. O Allah (swt), give us the tawfīq and the blessing to be among the companions of the Imām of our time (ʿaj).

Assalāmu ʿalayka yā Abā ʿAbdillāh!

Lesson 4: Filling Our Hearts

Objective: Children will learn how we can live our lives like the lives of Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) and his pure progeny.

During these nights of Muḥarram besides holding majālis where we learn lessons from and cry for and his companions, we also recite special duʿās. One of these very special duʿās is called Ziyārat ʿĀshūrāʾ.

Ziyārat ʿĀshūrāʾ is a special ziyārah in which we say our salāms to Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and his family and companions. In this ziyārah, we are making so many important duʿās to Allah (swt). For example, we ask Allah (swt) to send peace onto Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), and remove His mercy and kindness from the evil people who murdered). Another duʿāʾ we make is to be included amongst the army of Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj). Tonight, we will emphasize one special duʿāʾ in this ziyārah, where we say:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اْجْعَلْ مَحْيَایَ مَحْيَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

O Allah, make my life like the life of Muḥammad and the family of Muḥammad

In this special duʿāʾ we are asking Allah (swt) to give us the strength and success (tawfīq), to make good choices, just like the Noble Prophet (ṣ) and the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa). We want to live our lives like them, and when we leave this world, we want to be strong Muslims with strong faith. Some examples of actions we can do to mirror our lives with the lives of the Noble Prophet (ṣ) and his family include helping our parents, being kind to the orphans, helping the needy, volunteering at the masjid or Islamic center, praying ṣalāh, reciting Qurʾān, and being kind to others. When our actions are similar to their actions, our hearts will be similar to their hearts—hearts of faith! Today, we are going to make hearts of good deeds to symbolize what we can fill our hearts with—just like the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa).

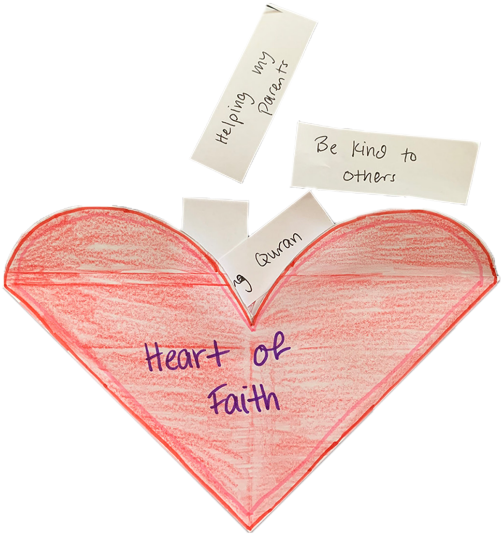
Heart of Good Deeds

Suggested Ages: 5+

Time: 40 minutes

Materials:

- Heart pocket template
- Construction paper
- Crayons/colored pencils
- Marker/pen
- Scissors
- Glue/tape



Procedure:

1. Cut out the pocket template by cutting along the dotted lines.
2. Fold the template in half widthwise along the solid line labeled A. The letters and lines should be visible.
3. Flip the folded template over so you can see the letters (the letter A will be upside down). Fold along the lines labeled B and C, bringing the folded edge toward the middle line where the arrows are pointing, forming a point.
4. Fold along the line labeled D, folding down over the two triangle flaps. Glue or tape this down to secure all folded flaps.
5. Color and decorate the heart pocket however you like.
6. From the construction paper, cut out some strips of paper. On each strip, write one way you can be like the Noble Prophet (ṣ) and the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa).
7. Fill the heart pocket with these strips of paper.

Watch [this video from NY kidscrafts] to see how to make the heart pocket.

A
B
C
D

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Speech 5: The Importance of the Masjid

بِسمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ربِّ الْعَالَمينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلينَ اَبِى الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلى آلهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ اللَّه فِى الْاَرَضِين

We thank Allah (swt) for allowing us to come together to remember our dear Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). On these nights, the masjids and centers are filled with the lovers of Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) who attend the majālis of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). The masjid plays an important role in our communities. They are centers of unity based on religion, not based on the way we look, the way we speak, or the place where we are born, but based on our belief system and values.

There's a popular saying:

المؤمن في المسجد كالسمک فى الماء

A believer in the masjid is like a fish in the water.

As a fish needs water to survive, we must be connected to a masjid. Everything about a masjid is important and holy, from its spiritual leader to the intention of the people who establish it or attend the majlis. This is why we must respect the masjid. For example, even if it doesn't have a policy against electronic devices, we should realize that it's disrespectful to use a device to play games or use social media during what is supposed to be a spiritual experience.

To be designated as a masjid, a place must be specifically set aside for that purpose. Once it is a masjid, it has special rules. For example, it is ḥarām to make it impure and it can never be destroyed. Since many centers here cannot do this, they are not official masājid but Islamic centers. These are the closest places we have to masājid in this part of the world, and we can apply some of their qualities or improvements to our Islamic centers.

Having Pure Intentions

Intentions in our actions and everything we do in life are important. For example, Shaykh ʿAbbās Qummī has written many books, but one, Mafātīḥ al-Jinān, is very famous because of his sincerity and pure intention while writing it. Mafātīḥ al-Jinān is filled with beautiful duʿās and supplications that we read every day. Similarly, pure intention is relevant when we attend the center for jamāʿah prayers, to make duʿāʾ, to attend the Friday prayer, or to establish a good connection with our community. In all instances, we ultimately go to the masjid to become better believers, such as by listening to speeches to learn about Allah (swt) and our religion and to be inspired to perform our duties. We should reflect on what we hear and ask questions when unsure.

The Islamic center is where we can grow in many ways. It helps us make good friends who help us become better Muslims, move closer to Allah (swt), learn about Islam and other topics, and come together to worship Allah (swt). Since it gives us so much, we should help in the masjid by keeping it clean, serving food, or volunteering. Of course, we must have our parents' permission and guidance when volunteering and make sure that even while we are volunteering, we are doing it in a way that makes Allah (swt) happy and are observing the bounds of ḥalāl and ḥarām. During the months of Ramaḍān, Muḥarram, and Ṣafar, we see a lot more people come to visit our center. Perhaps during those times, we can try to be extra helpful.

The Majālis of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)

In Muḥarram and Ṣafar, we come to the masjid for the majālis of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). These majālis are extremely important! Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) was martyred around 1400 years ago but, each year, the lovers of Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) get together in Muḥarram and Ṣafar to remember Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), the mission of Karbalāʾ, why our Imām (ʿa) was martyred, and what are our responsibilities and duties towards the Imām of our time (ʿaj). Due to the majālis of Muḥarram and Ṣafar, pure Islam and its teachings are still alive today. In the majālis of Ahlul Bayt (ʿa), many cry. Even the Noble Prophet of Islam (ṣ) cried when he was given the news that Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) would be martyred, and this was 30 years before Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) was killed! These tears are valuable, and Allah (swt) loves it when we cry for a good cause, like asking Him for forgiveness or remembering all the tragedies that happened to the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa). They help us connect with the Imām (ʿa) and motivate us to change ourselves for the better to become closer to and follow in the footsteps of our role models.

One of our scholars, Āyatullāh Mīrzā Jawād Tabrīzī was a very famous āyatullāh and marjaʿ, but he would say, "I wish I had a beautiful voice so I could recite the muṣībah of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)." This was his only wish because he knew how much reward there is to recite the majālis of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). Mourning is important and valuable for many reasons. First, when we come to the majālis of Ahlul Bayt (ʿa), we are expressing our love towards the Imām of our time (ʿaj) and the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa). When we shed tears, we should ask Allah (swt) for forgiveness to become better people and followers of the Imām of our time (ʿaj). During the majālis of Ahlul Bayt (ʿa), you see hundreds, thousands, sometimes even millions of people getting together. There is no other place or day where year after year, 20-30 million people get together besides the day of Arbaʿīn of Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) in Karbalāʾ.

The majālis of Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) are a means for us to connect with Allah (swt). They are a place where we can recharge our spiritual batteries, which helps us make better choices. Everyone comes here for one reason: our love for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and his holy household (ʿa). We learn different lessons during the majālis of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). One of these is when Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) said in history, "A person like me will never give allegiance to a person like Yazīd." The Imām (ʿa) was talking to us. He was saying we should never give allegiance to a person like Yazīd. We should recognize who the Yazīd of our time is and not give our allegiance by acting like them or doing ḥarām actions Yazīd would want.

Majālis and mourning Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) remind us of our responsibility towards remembering the oppressed and making duʿāʾ for them, and for those who sacrificed everything they had so we could be Muslims today. We must respect these majālis by listening and learning from their stories.

Muṣībah

Let's now take our hearts to Karbalāʾ, the land of patience and hope. Tonight, we want to remember two great shuhadā of Karbalāʾ—two brothers named ʿAun and Muḥammad. ʿAun and Muḥammad were the sons of Lady Zaynab and her husband ʿAbdullāh ibn Jaʿfar.

When Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) wanted to leave Medina, he went to Lady Zaynab's husband, ʿAbdullāh ibn Jaʿfar, to tell him he was leaving for Karbalāʾ. When ʿAbdullāh saw Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), he began to cry and told him, "I know you are going to be alone in this path. No one will help you but yourself. I know that Allah will help you in all of these hardships, but people will have no mercy."

ʿAbdullāh ibn Jaʿfar wished to go with Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) like everyone else, but could not due to his old age and poor health. He could not walk without a cane and his back was bent. He told Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), "Since I am so sick and cannot walk, I cannot help you, but I have two gifts for you. One is ʿAun and the other is Muḥammad. I have these two young soldiers; they can help you. Will you take them as my gift?"

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) cried out loud. He said to ʿAbdullāh ibn Jaʿfar, "O my brother, may Allah have mercy upon you. I know that you are my best friend and my best follower, and I know that you want to give me a gift, but I prefer that you keep them because you need them."

ʿAbdullāh ibn Jaʿfar came and said, "O Ḥusayn, I cannot come with you. Please allow me to send my two sons instead."

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) accepted and the two young boys went with him to Karbalāʾ. On the night of ʿĀshūrāʾ, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) gathered his companions and gave them one final chance to leave. He said, "Tomorrow, there is going to be a big battle, and anyone who remains will become shahīd. Yazīd's army is not looking for you — they want me. If you want to leave and escape, you may go. I release you from your responsibilities." He then blew out the candles and everything went dark. How kind was our Imām (ʿa)— he didn't want to shame or embarrass anyone. He wanted to give them the chance to leave in the dark so no one would see and they wouldn't have to face him.

When Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) said this, ʿAun and Muḥammad stood up and began to cry. They said, "O Uncle, O Imām, how can we leave you alone and go on with our own lives? That is impossible!"

They made it clear that no matter what, they wouldn't leave their Imām and uncle's side. When Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) heard this, he hugged his two nephews. What a blessing it was for him to have such loyal supporters!

On the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, the two brothers fought bravely. Even though they were so young, they were on the battlefield defending their Imām (ʿa) for a long time. Alas, they were both struck. As they fell from their horses, they cried out, "Assalāmu ʿalayka yā Abā ʿAbdillāh!" When Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) heard their call, he rushed to help them, but by the time he reached them, their bodies had been trampled by the enemy's horses.

As Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) carried the bodies of ʿAun and Muḥammad back to the tents, his mind must have been burdened with thoughts of his sister. He likely worried about how he would break the news to her, knowing that Lady Zaynab would be heartbroken to see her two sons in such a state. He must have wondered how she would manage to contain her tears.

But when Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) brought them back to the camp, he saw Lady Zaynab sitting inside her tent, not coming out. When she heard Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) crying outside she rushed out and asked, "O my brother, why are you crying?"

He asked her, "O Zaynab, did you not hear the news of your two sons?"

Lady Zaynab replied, "They were a gift from me and my husband to you, and they are now in paradise with their grandfather, Rasūlullāh (ṣ)."

What strength and faith must Lady Zaynab have had, and how much must she have loved her brother and Imām (ʿa) to sacrifice her only two sons?

Now we must think and ask ourselves, what do we have to offer the Imām of our time (ʿaj)? If Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj) were to come and say, "Is there any helper to help me?" What will we have to offer? Will we be willing to give up our most prized possessions for our Imām? What will we sacrifice in his way?

Assalāmu ʿalayka yā Abā ʿAbdillāh!

Lesson 5: Fish in Water

Objective: Children will learn about the relationship of a believer with the masjid.

Coming together in the majlis of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) to mourn and remember him is a tradition of the Prophets (ʿa). People all over the world continue this tradition either in their homes or at a local masjid or Islamic center. The masjid holds a special significance. It's where believers gather and where Allah's presence is felt strongly. It is a safe space for us to remember Allah (swt), pray together, and build strong bonds.

During the time of the Prophet (ṣ), the masjid was the hub of the community! People went there to learn, pray, seek help, and even hold events. It was the center of the city. When the Prophet (ṣ) migrated from Mecca to Medina, the first thing he did was build a masjid, known as Masjid an-Nabī. Even before reaching Medina, he instructed his companions to establish one between Mecca and Medina, which became known as Masjid al-Quba, the first mosque in Islam.

Today, we visit the masjid or Islamic center regularly for Duʿāʾ Kumayl, Jumuʿah prayers, or during the months of Muḥarram and Shahr Ramaḍān. It is where we deepen our understanding of Islam and connect with our fellow believers. There is a popular saying: "A believer in the masjid is like a fish in the water." Just as a fish thrives in water, we Muslims are at our best when we are surrounded by those who share our values. It's also an ideal place for us to perform good deeds, like helping others. Today, we're going to create a craft to illustrate how we flourish in the masjid, just like a fish in water.

Fish Bowl Craft

Suggested Ages: 5+

Time: 40 minutes

Materials:

- Fish template
- Paper plate
- Crayons/colored pencils
- Scissors
- Glue/tape
- Other craft materials

Procedure:

1. Color and decorate the pieces of the fish template.
2. Cut out the pieces of the template.
3. Make a fish bowl from the paper plate by carefully cutting out a small piece. Use this piece to make a stand for the fish bowl.
4. Color and decorate the fish bowl. You can use other craft materials, like paint to make it look extra special.
5. Glue the pieces from the template inside the fish bowl.
6. Finish decorating your craft however you like!

Craft inspired by: Kids Activities

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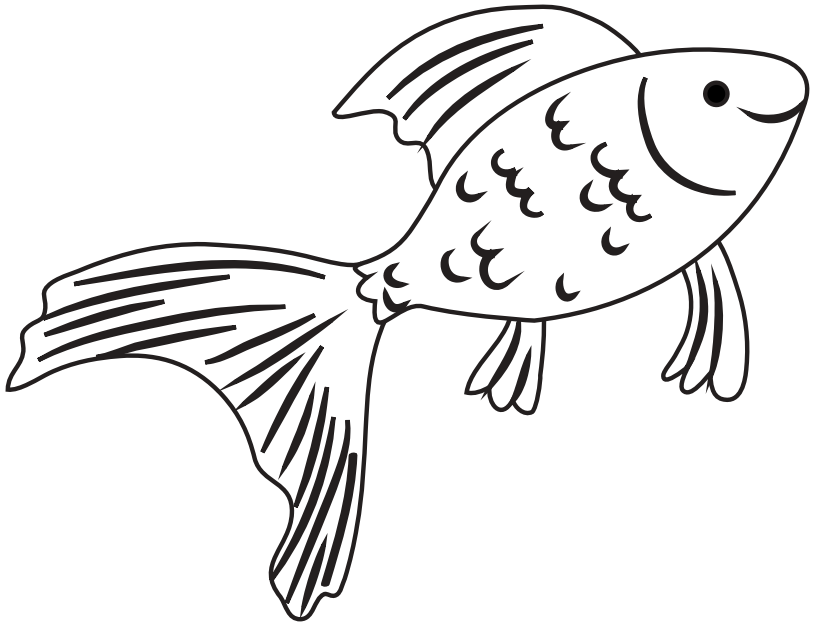

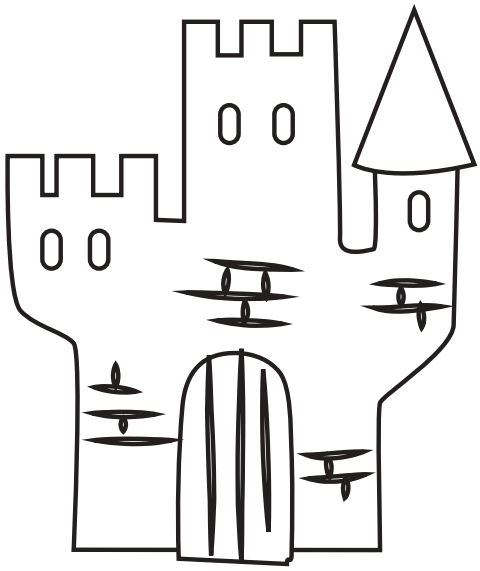

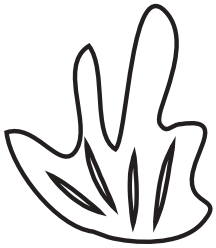

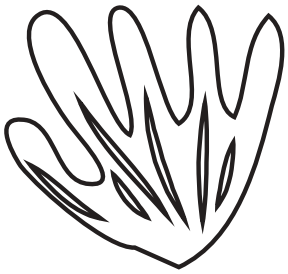

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Speech 6: Tawakkul

بِسمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ربِّ الْعَالَمينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلينَ اَبِى الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلى آلهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ اللَّه فِى الْاَرَضِين

We thank Allah (swt) for giving us the opportunity to come together for another night to mourn for our beloved Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa).

Many people think about what they want to be when they grow up and how they will achieve their goals. Typically it means finishing high school, attending college, and possibly even going all the way to a Ph.D! This is a lengthy process that requires a lot of hard work. Allah (swt) has given us our *ʿaql*, or intellect, so that we can sit, think, and plan. This is important; we should try to always have a plan. But ultimately, things are not completely in our hands; they're in the hands of Allah (swt).

For example, I'm sure your parents have had to replace a broken light bulb at home. They may grab a ladder, get a brand new bulb, go through the effort of installing it, but then one day, a storm causes an outage and the electricity will not turn on. No matter how much effort they put in, at the end of the day, the light bulb is not going to turn on. We have to plan and do our best, but at the end of the day, the results are in the hands of Allah (swt). It is He who decides the outcome and what occurs.

Tawakkul

Islam teaches us that our job is to do our responsibilities and then leave the outcome in the hands of Allah (swt). For example, if you have a test at school, it is your job to study really hard for it, but the results of the test are in the hands of Allah (swt). You can't just go to an exam without studying at all, and then pray to Allah (swt) to give you a good grade. It doesn't work like that because Allah (swt) has created a system. Now, if you do study, do you know for sure you're going to get a good grade? No. You may go to the exam and forget something that you have studied. We need to try our best and ask Allah (swt) for help and leave the results in His hands. Relying on Allah (swt) and trusting in Him is a beautiful concept called *tawakkul*.

There is a beautiful ḥadīth from Imām ʿAlī (ʿa), where he says, "I came to know Allah by all the plans that I made, where Allah's plans were different."[1] This means realizing that we can try our best to plan, but something unexpected can happen to change our plans. For example, I have the perfect day planned to have a picnic with my family. I pack a nice basket with sandwiches and juice; we get our frisbees and volleyball ready. Everyone is dressed and ready to go. But then, out of nowhere, it begins to rain. We had everything planned, but something unexpected happened. In this scenario, I trust Allah (swt) because I know there is good in this for me and everyone else. This is what Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) means in this ḥadīth. We also learn that we are not in charge because if we were in charge, things would always go our way.

1 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Section 2, Hadith# 250.

Allah (swt) is the best of planners. When the Prophet (ṣ) was migrating from Mecca to Medina, the Quraysh were following him and planned to kill him. Did the Prophet (ṣ) become scared? No, not at all. He had tawakkul and trusted Allah (swt). What did he do? He hid inside the Cave of Thawr. The Quraysh had tracked his prints and followed him to the cave. They were going to go inside and kill him, but they saw a spider web blocking the entrance of the cave. They thought that there was no way the Prophet (ṣ) could be hiding inside because he would have to break the web to go inside, so they thought they lost him and left. It was Allah (swt) who commanded the spider to create that web after the Prophet (ṣ) had entered. The Prophet (ṣ) trusted and relied on Allah (swt) to take care of him. Even though the Quraysh had a plan and the best trackers, Allah (swt) had a greater plan, which is why He says in the Noble Qurʾān:

وَإِذْ يَمْكُرُ بِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيُثْبِتُوكَ أَوْ يَقْتُلُوكَ أَوْ يُخْرِجُوكَ ۚ وَيَمْكُرُونَ وَيَمْكُرُ اللَّـهُ ۖ وَاللَّـهُ خَيْرُ الْمَاكِرِينَ

When the faithless plotted against you to take you captive, or to kill or expel you—they plotted and Allah planned, and Allah is the best of planners.[2]

Remembering this story during difficult times can help us when we are in a similar situation. Sometimes, it feels like there's no way out, but remember that Allah (swt) is the One who is in control, and when we trust Him, He takes care of us in ways that we cannot even imagine.

Doesn't it make sense that when we want to do something, we rely on Allah (swt), and we trust in the plan that He has made for us? Allah (swt), being All-Knowledgeable and All-Powerful, knows exactly how to help us and has the power to do so. He is All-Kind, and loves us and wants to help.

So It makes perfect sense to trust Him and rely on Him. In fact, not trusting Him doesn't make sense! Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) demonstrated the highest levels of tawakkul in Karbalāʾ. Despite all the hardships and tragedies he saw on the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, he kept repeating the following phrase:

رِضًا بِقَضَائِهِ وَ تَسلِيمًالِاَمرِهِ

I am pleased with Allah's plan and submit to His will

He had tawakkul and relied on Allah (swt) completely, and He took care of him. Yazīd wanted to get rid of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and his name. The army of Yazīd even rode their horses over the body of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), so that nothing would be left of the Imām (ʿa). Yet, after 1400 years, where is Yazīd and where is Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)? Where is the grave of Yazīd? Look at the grave of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). How many people do you know named Yazīd, and how many people do you know named Ḥusayn? There are millions of people in all corners of the world with the name Ḥusayn. This is all because Allah (swt) made Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) high and Yazīd low. Even though Yazīd wanted to do something and despite his money and power, Allah (swt) has the ultimate power to not let it happen.

2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Anfāl (8), Verse 30.

Tying Your Part

The concept of tawakkul can be summed up in one simple sentence: "Tie your camel, and then trust in Allah." This means that if I have a camel, I shouldn't just leave it loose and trust that Allah (swt) will take care of it. I have to do my part by tying the camel then trusting in Allah (swt) to take care of it. We have to do our best, but leave the outcome in the hands of Allah (swt). As long as we do this, the results don't matter because we have fulfilled our responsibility. Study, help other people, and try to do good deeds for the sake of Allah (swt) and whatever happens, rely on Him and trust that He is doing the best for you. Sometimes we strive for something and give our best effort, but it still doesn't happen. There may be a reason for this, even if we don't understand it. We must trust in the Best of Planners, for He has a plan and purpose for everything He does.

Allah (swt) says, "Surely, Allah loves those who trust in Him."[3] Trusting in Him means that even though we may find ourselves in a bad situation, we look to Allah (swt) and know that He is there. That is the concept of tawakkul, and all of us should try to have it. O Allah, write our names among those who trust You.

Muṣībah:

Now, Let us take our hearts to Karbalāʾ. On the night of ʿĀshūrāʾ, many people ran away and left Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). Eventually, he was left with only 72 companions. After everyone else left, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) began talking to his true companions and told them what was going to happen the next day.

He said, "Tomorrow I will be killed, and everyone who is with me will be killed and from you men, nobody will remain." Among them was a young boy who was listening and looking at the face of the Imām (ʿa) as he was saying this. The young boy was quietly wondering to himself, "What about me? Am I going to be martyred, too? What about me?" He was a person who had complete tawakkul and trust in Allah (swt), no matter what that plan meant for his life. He knew Allah's plan for him was the best plan. This boy was the orphaned son of Imām Ḥasan (ʿa), Qāsim. They say he was around 13 years old.

When Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) said this, Qāsim asked, "Am I going to be killed tomorrow too, Uncle?"

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) looked at him lovingly and he said, "O my son, how do you see death?"

Qāsim looked at his uncle and gave a beautiful answer, an answer that has remained in history. If you were going to die with thirsty lips, fighting with a brutal army on the burning sands of Karbalāʾ in such a tragic way, what would you say? Qāsim replied, "It is sweeter than honey for me," all because he had trust in Allah (swt), and he wanted to please Him.

The day of ʿĀshūrāʾ came, and the companions were martyred one by one. After the son of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), ʿAlī al-Akbar, was martyred, Qāsim wanted to go to the battlefield. At first, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) did not give him permission. Qāsim had to beg his uncle to allow him to go to the battlefield. "Please Uncle, please, I beg you to give me permission to go and fight in the way of Allah." Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) said, "No, you're too young, and you are the trust of my brother Ḥasan (ʿa)." However, Qāsim persisted until he eventually received permission to go.

3 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Āl ʿImrān (3), Verse 109.

When he went to the battlefield, they say his face was filled with light and he said to the enemies, “If you don’t know me, I am the son of Ḥasan (ʿa)! I am the grandson of your Prophet, Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā!” He fought very bravely and for as long as he could. Eventually, one of the enemies struck him and Qāsim fell to the ground. As he fell, he called out to his uncle and Imām (ʿa) for help. But the soldiers around him were trying to stop Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) from getting to Qāsim. At last, when Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) finally reached Qāsim, he looked at Qāsim and with tears in his eyes and said, “I swear by Allah that it is so hard for your uncle that you call him but he cannot answer you and when he comes and answers you, it is too late because you have been martyred.”

The name of this martyr, this young man, this young boy, remains in history for all these years because of his bravery and love for his Imām (ʿa), his tawakkul and trust in Allah (swt), and the sacrifices he made. He has been made immortal by his words, which we should never forget. Qāsim taught us that death in the way of Allah (swt) is, “aḥla min al-ʿasal” — “sweeter than honey.”

Assalāmu ʿalayka yā Abā ʿAbdillāh!

Lesson 6: Allah's Plan

Objective: Children will learn about tawakkul, reliance on Allah (swt), and how Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) had tawakkul.

Earlier, we talked about Imām Ḥusayn's strong īmān (faith), that led him to sacrifice his life for Allah (swt). Another quality he possessed was tawakkul, or trust in Allah (swt). On the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, he repeatedly said:

رِضًا بِقَضَآئِهِ وَ تَسْلِيمًا لِاَمرِهِ

I am pleased with Allah's plan and submit to His command.

By reciting this phrase, perhaps Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) reminded himself to have tawakkul. He understood that Allah (swt) is the most knowledgeable, powerful, and the most kind. This trust in Allah's plan may have helped him endure the difficulties of that day. We can learn from Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) to have tawakkul, which can support us in challenging times.

When we have strong tawakkul, it's hard for anything to shake us. We remain positive and navigate life's challenges knowing that Allah (swt) can make anything happen. There is a saying that goes, "tie your camel, and then trust in Allah." It means we should do our part, make effort, and then trust in Allah (swt). For instance, we secure our bicycle and trust Alalh (swt) will protect it. When we study or do our homework, we put in effort to learn and excel, then pray for success. Today, we'll create a craft to remind us to do our part, and trust in Allah (swt).

Camel Craft

Suggested Ages: 5+

Time: 40 minutes

Materials:

- Camel template
- Tissue paper (green and brown, or any other colors)
- Crayons/colored pencils
- Scissors
- Glue (preferably liquid)
- String/yarn

Procedure:

1. Color the camel picture and cut it out from the template.
2. Make small pieces from the tissue paper. On the main template page, fill in the tree with the tissue paper pieces (alternatively you can color the tree).
3. Glue the camel next to the tree.
4. Now take a piece of string or yarn, glue one end at the camel's neck, and the other end on the tree.
5. Finish decorating the craft however you like.

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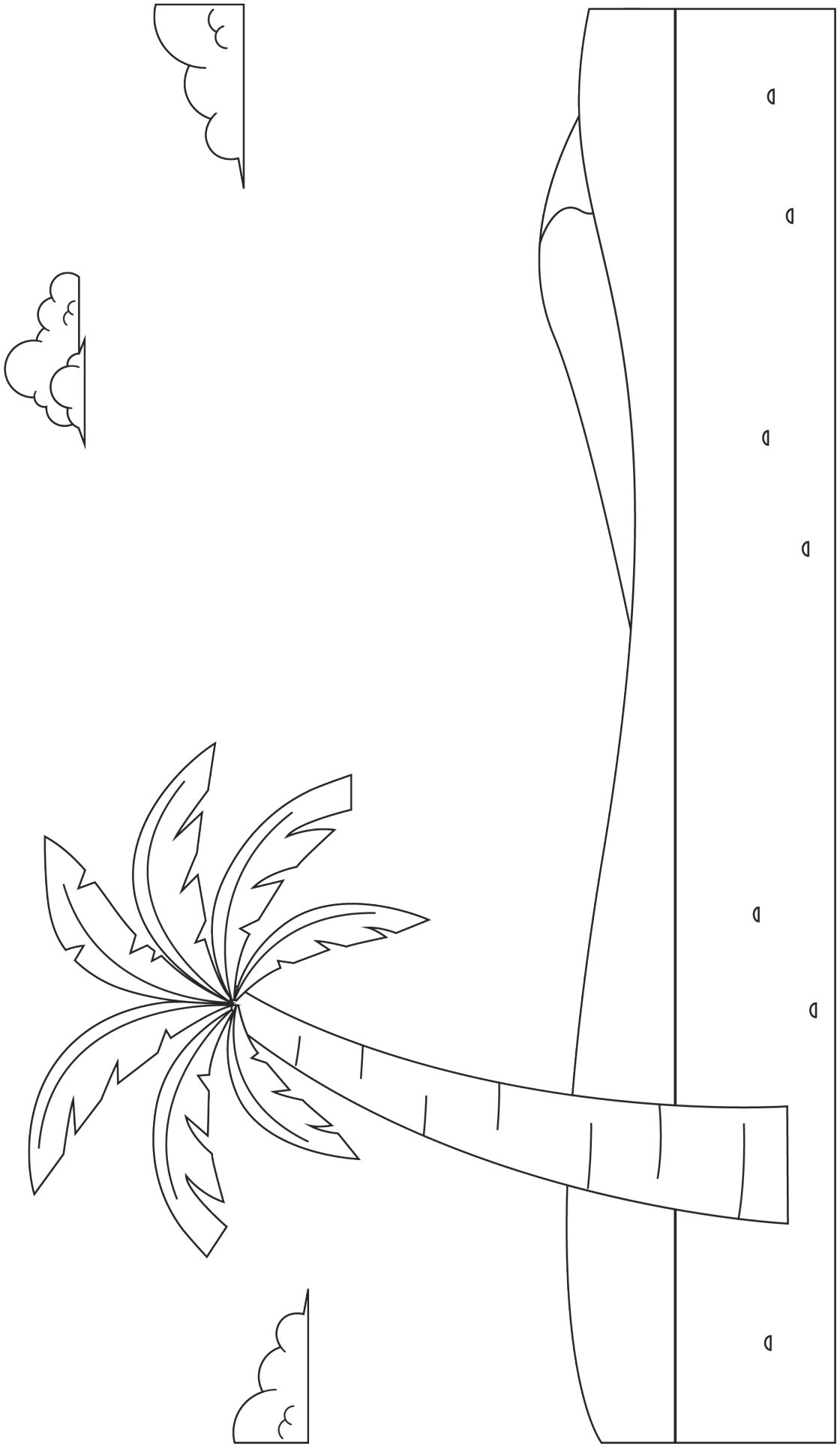

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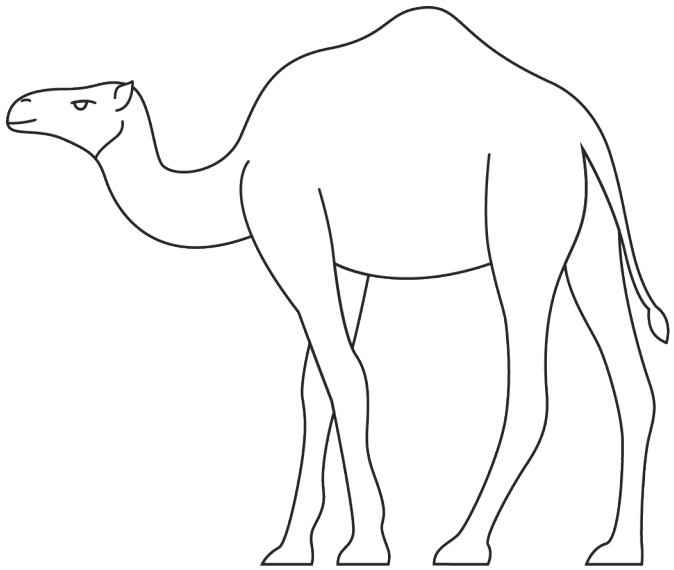

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Speech 7: Duʿāʾ

بِسمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيم

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We thank Allah (swt) for giving us the opportunity to gather again to remember our beloved Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). Recall the last time you made a duʿāʾ and asked Allah (swt) for something. We actually all make numerous duʿāʾ every day just in our daily ṣalāh! For example, in the 6th āyah of Sūrah al-Fātiḥah, we say:

اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيمَ

Guide us to the straight path.

This is a duʿāʾ that we make ten times every day in our prayers. There is a very beautiful verse in the Noble Qurʾān that says:

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِى عَنِّى فَإِنِّى قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ

And when My servants ask you about Me, tell them that surely I am near. I respond to the call of the supplicant when he calls upon Me.[1]

When we call upon Allah (swt), He promises to respond. Duʿāʾ, or supplication, is one of the best ways to get close to our Creator, and we have been highly recommended to ask Him through duʿāʾ. Allah (swt) is our Provider, the One who gives us everything. We could never survive on our own. If we aren't constantly asking from Allah (swt), then it might be a sign that we are not thinking properly about our situation, or God forbid, a sign of arrogance because we think we are perfect and don't need to improve. At the very least, we should pray for the protection of the blessings we have already received, such as a healthy mind and body, family, friends, community, and our strong faith and love for Islam. Duʿāʾ is not only for times of need but should be a daily practice because Allah (swt) loves when we connect with Him. By asking Him, we acknowledge our dependence on Him.

We are created in a way that everything is calling upon Allah (swt) for help. For example, every breath we take, it is with the hope that there will be clean air to provide the oxygen we need. Every time we swallow food, it's with the hope that it will be digested properly in our body and provide us with the nutrients and energy to keep going. Even those people who don't believe in Allah (swt) actually make duʿāʾ to Him every moment they exist because of the way they were created: in need of Allah (swt) for everything, constantly.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 186.

Why Aren't Duʿās Answered?

Sometimes we beg and pray to Allah (swt) for something and we don't get it. We feel so disappointed! When we pray and haven't received what we desire, it may be because Allah (swt) loves to hear us call upon Him and express our needs and wishes. To help us create a better connection with Him, He waits a bit to answer our duʿāʾ. Allah (swt) desires for us to be close to Him. He wants us to keep knocking on His door and asking from Him.

It might also be that what we're asking for is actually bad for us. Remember, Allah (swt) is the Most Knowledgeable, so He knows what is best for us. We have to have tawakkul and trust that when our duʿās aren't answered immediately, that means that either the timing isn't right or that Allah (swt) has something better for us. It's still important that we ask Him, though, because even just the act of asking Allah (swt) and making duʿāʾ brings us closer to Him, and that is our ultimate goal in this life.

Etiquette of Duʿāʾ

We can make duʿāʾ at any time and in any way we like. We can pray to Allah (swt) in our hearts or out loud. It can be sitting, standing, or in sajdah. However, just as everything has a best practice or manner in which it should be done, there are some best practices or etiquette of duʿāʾ as well.

- We should begin duʿāʾ in the name of Allah (swt) by saying, "Bismillāhir Raḥmānir Raḥīm." Part of having tawakkul is when we recite Bismillāh when asking Allah (swt) for help. That "bi" of Bismillāh is saying "O Allah (swt), I ask only You for help."
- We should call Allah (swt) by His beautiful names. The Prophet (ṣ) taught Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) a special duʿāʾ called Duʿāʾ Jawshan al-Kabīr, which we usually recite in the month of Ramaḍān. This duʿāʾ mentions approximately 1,000 of the beautiful names of Allah (swt)! We can use this duʿāʾ as an inspiration, and call upon Allah (swt) by one of His many names. Maybe if we're scared, we can call upon Him by His name al-Muʾmin, the One who provides safety. Or if we really want something, we can call upon Him by His name al-Karīm, the Most Generous.
- We should recite a ṣalawāt before and after our duʿāʾ. Ṣalawāt is one duʿāʾ that will always be accepted since it means to send peace and blessings upon our beloved Prophet Muḥammad (ṣ) and his family. First, we ask Allah (swt) to send blessings on the Prophet (ṣ), then we ask Him for our needs, and then once again recite ṣalawāt. The first and last duʿāʾ are accepted and Allah (swt) is so Kind that inshāʾAllāh the duʿāʾ in the middle, which is our wish, is also accepted.
- We should pray for others before ourselves. If we are only concerned with our own needs, then we are being selfish. We should always remember the needs of others, especially those who have helped us in some way to guide us towards truth and goodness, those who are oppressed, and above all, the Imām of our time (ʿaj) We have heard the story, where young Imām Ḥasan (ʿa) was sitting and watching his mother, Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ (ʿa), making duʿāʾ, and she made duʿāʾ for many people before her own family. When Imām Ḥasan (ʿa) asked his mother why she did that, she explained that we should first make duʿāʾ for others, such as neighbors and friends, and then for ourselves and our family.

- We must sincerely believe that Allah (swt) will answer our prayer and that He can grant what we're asking. This is called having ḥusn aẓ-ẓan, meaning to have a positive outlook and expecting the best. When we have ḥusn aẓ-ẓan of Allah (swt), it means we have hope and confidence that He will take care of us in the best way possible. Allah (swt) is the Most Knowledgeable, Most Powerful, and Most Merciful so He knows, can, and wants to do what is best for us. For this reason, it makes sense to have ḥusn aẓ-ẓan and expect that He will answer our duʿās in the best possible way.

It has been said that one day, someone was standing next to the Kaʿbah and holding onto the curtain, praying, "O Allah! Forgive me! But I know you're not going to forgive me." People were looking at him and wondering, "What is wrong with this guy? What kind of duʿāʾ is this?" So, they asked him about it, and he said, "Well, I was among the army of Yazīd, and I was in Karbalāʾ when they killed Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), and I know that Allah is not going to forgive me." But someone replied, "Your act of losing hope in Allah is worse than your act of joining the army of Yazīd in Karbalāʾ. You should never lose hope in Allah! Always have hope in Allah!"

When making duʿāʾ, it is also good to acknowledge that we're not perfect and can make mistakes. We should ask forgiveness for these mistakes and repent or return to Allah (swt). Sometimes, when a person makes a lot of mistakes, their prayer is not accepted. Can we drink water from a glass that is dirty? No, of course not! First, we must wash the glass, and then fill it with clean and pure water. Similarly, we need to wash our hearts with istighfār and tawbah, meaning forgiveness and repentance, to be ready to accept Allah's kindness and mercy.

InshāʾAllāh we can try to incorporate some of these etiquettes when we make duʿāʾ to Allah (swt). Remember, whether our duʿāʾ is answered right away, or later, or not at all, the most important thing is the act of making duʿāʾ and knowing that He has heard us. We should have a positive outlook and truly believe that Allah (swt) will answer our duʿāʾ while trusting Him and not losing hope if it isn't answered.

Places to Make Duʿāʾ

Often we'll see people cry during or after making duʿāʾ. If we are able to cry while making duʿāʾ, this is a good sign that our hearts are soft. Allah (swt) loves it when someone sheds tears and comes to His door. This is why sometimes, at the end of a muṣībah, reciters will make duʿāʾ. They know these duʿās are more likely to be accepted when their hearts are softened and tears have flown from their eyes.

We can make duʿāʾ at any time and from anywhere, but there are certain times and places where our duʿās hold more weight and are more likely to be answered. For example, there are special nights, like Laylatul Qadr, where it is highly recommended to stay up all night and make duʿāʾ. We also have in our ḥādīth that duʿās made in Karbalāʾ, especially under the dome of Imām Ḥusayn's shrine, are more likely to be answered. We pray that, inshāʾAllāh, we can all make the journey and go for ziyārah to Karbalāʾ soon.

Muṣībah:

The seventh day of Muḥarram is tragic for the camp of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) in Karbalāʾ. It is this day that the enemy soldiers have blocked access to the Euphrates River. It is this day that the cries of "al-ʿaṭash"—"the thirst," were spoken from the dry lips of the children of Banī Hāshim.

Tonight, we want to remember a very special companion of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), who made a very important choice at a very critical time. On the 9th night of Muḥarram, the enemies wanted to begin the battle, but Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) requested the battle to be delayed for one more day. Why? You see, one of the things he wanted to do that night was pray to Allah (swt) and read the Noble Qurʾān. The privilege of being able to talk to Allah (swt) was so dear to Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) that he wanted the opportunity to worship Allah (swt) for one more night. But maybe another reason was because Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) was waiting for a special guest who was not in his camp yet. Who was this special guest? He was waiting for Ḥurr.

Ḥurr was the captain of Yazīd's army. He was the one who stopped Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) from going to Kūfah. He blocked the path of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) with 1,000 men and forced Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) to go to Karbalāʾ. But Ḥurr had some very good characteristics in him, and one of those was the love and respect he had for Sayyidah Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ (ʿa). On the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, when he had to make a critical choice, that love and respect really helped him.

The name Ḥurr means someone who is free, and Ḥurr lived up to his name—he freed himself from the fire of hell, and from making choices based on his desires instead of Allah's desire. The events of Karbalāʾ teach us many lessons, and Ḥurr taught us a lesson and set an example for all of us. Ḥurr had to make a choice: stay with the army of Yazīd and do something that he knows is wrong—he knows killing Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) is wrong. Or should he leave his job, leave his position, leave his title, and join the camp of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)? Should he choose glory in this world or eternal happiness in the Hereafter? And this was a very hard choice for this captain of Yazīd's army to make.

At the same time, there was another person faced with the same decision: ʿUmar ibn Saʿd, the commander of Yazīd's army. ʿUmar ibn Saʿd grew up with Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and knew him very well. He had to choose between killing Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and gaining the hellfire while receiving the glory of this world, or abandoning that glory and joining Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). ʿUmar ibn Saʿd made the wrong choice and became the commander of the army that killed Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). To this day, people curse him whenever they hear his name.

But Ḥurr decided to leave the army of Yazīd and the glory of this world. Ḥurr chose heaven. He chose happiness in the Hereafter. He chose Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)! In our lives, there are many times when we have to choose between good and bad, ḥalāl and ḥarām, right and wrong, heaven and hell. At these times, be like Ḥurr—choose good deeds, avoid ḥarām things, go for the truth, and choose to be in heaven.

On the morning of ʿĀshūrāʾ, Ḥurr went to Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and asked for forgiveness, because he was the one who stopped Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and forced him to come to Karbalāʾ. Remember, brothers and sisters, it is never too late to ask for forgiveness. Of course, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) forgave him. Ḥurr said he wanted to be one of the first to fight and sacrifice in the way of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa).

Ḥurr went to the battlefield and fought very bravely. Many people in the camp of Yazīd began asking, "What happened to Ḥurr? He was our captain. Why did he leave our side and choose to be with Ḥusayn?" Ḥurr was a strong and brave man. He fought with courage, but eventually, he was injured and fell from his horse.

In the last moments of his life, he wished that Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) would come to his side and he could see his face once more, but he wasn't sure whether Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) would come or not. After all, he was the one who forced Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and his family to come to Karbalāʾ. Suddenly, he felt a kind hand holding up his head. He opened his eyes and saw the beautiful face of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). Yes, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) placed the head of Ḥurr in his lap and said, "You were named by your mother as Ḥurr, meaning free. Ḥurr, you are truly a free person, true to your namesake. You are free in this world and in the hereafter!"

It's a very good duʿāʾ for us to make that in the last moments of our life, the Imām of our time (ʿaj) is looking at us and praying for us. Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) was praying for Ḥurr, that Allah (swt) forgive him, and Ḥurr became a famous martyr of Karbalāʾ. But if he had made the wrong choice, like ʿUmar ibn Saʿd, he would have been someone people would curse for hundreds of years. We ask Allah (swt) to bless us and help us to make the right choices at those critical moments in our lives, and that Ḥurr be a source of inspiration and motivation for all of us.

Assalāmu ʿalayka yā Abā ʿAbdillāh!

Lesson 7: Calling Out to Allah (swt)

Objective: Children will learn about the concept of duʿāʾ and to seek their needs from Allah (swt).

An essential practice in Islam is making duʿāʾ. In Arabic, duʿāʾ means to calling out to Allah (swt). It's a way of conversing with Allah (swt) and asking for our needs. Allah (swt) reminds us in the Noble Qurʾān that He is near, urging us to call upon Him with duʿāʾ, promising to respond when we reach out to Him in prayer.[1] One method of making duʿāʾ is by reciting the words taught to us by the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa), such as Duʿāʾ Kumayl, Duʿāʾ Tawassul, Duʿāʾ Faraj, and many more.

Once, when Imām Ḥasan (ʿa) was a young child, he stayed up all night observing his mother, Sayyidah Fāṭimah (ʿa), praying to Allah (swt). He noticed that she prayed for everyone—neighbors, friends, and finally, her family. When Imām Ḥasan (ʿa) questioned why she prayed for her family last, she replied, "First your neighbors, then your household."[2]

We should pray for all everyone and Muslims worldwide, especially those who are sick, poor, oppressed, unfairly imprisoned, and facing hardships. Additionally, we should pray for our parents, family, neighbors, teachers, and everyone who plays a role in our lives and community. Today, we'll create a craft where we can compile a list of people to pray for and jot down some of our own duʿās.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Baqarah (2), Verse 186.
2 Shaykh Ḥurr ʿĀmilī, *Wasāʾil ash-Shīʿah*, Vol. 7, P. 113.

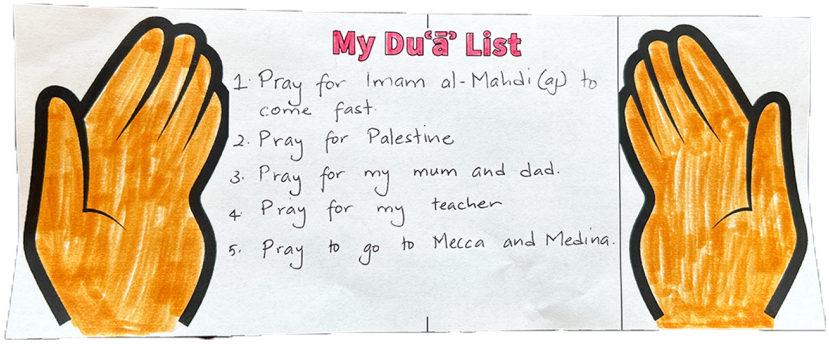
My Duʿāʾ List

Suggested Ages: 5+

Time: 35 minutes

Materials:

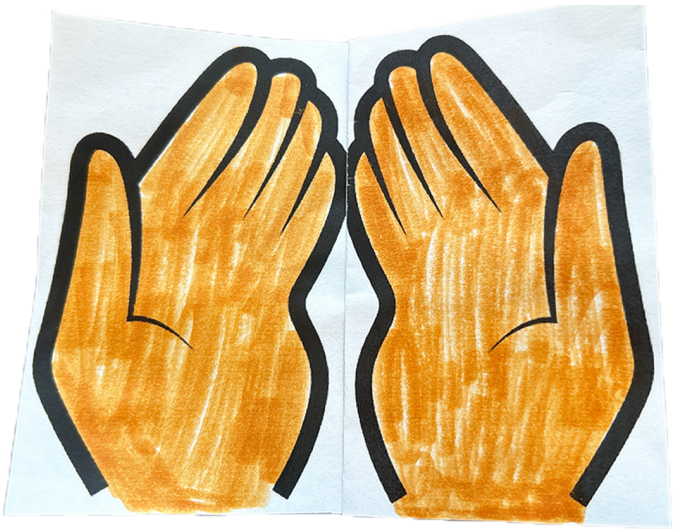
- Prayer hands template
- Crayons/colored pencils
- Marker/pen
- Scissors


My Duʿāʾ List
1. Pray for Imam al-Mahdi (aj) to come fast.
2. Pray for Palestine
3. Pray for my mum and dad.
4. Pray for my teacher
5. Pray to go to Mecca and Medina.

Procedure:

1. Color and decorate the template however you like. In the blank space under “My Duʿāʾ List” you can write down the people you want to pray for or any duʿās you have.
2. Cut out the prayer hands template by cutting all along the outer dotted edges.
3. Fold the template in half (at the small lines). Then, open the fold.
4. Then, fold along the other solid line, next to the right-side prayer hand. Make sure the prayer hand is showing.
5. Now, when you fold along the first fold line, both prayer hands should be together with the list hidden. When you open it, the list will be visible.
6. You can keep this list in your musallah, or the place where you pray ṣalāh, and remember to pray for those people or say those duʿās after every ṣalāh.

Craft inspired by: Wright Ideas with Susan



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My Duʿāʾ List

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Speech 8: True Courage

بِسمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ربِّ الْعَالَمينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلينَ اَبِى الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلى آلهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ اللَّه فِى الْاَرَضِين

Tonight is an important night, it is the night that is dedicated to a person loved by Allah (swt), Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj), and all of us: Abul Faḍl ʿAbbās.

What is the meaning of courage? Who is a brave person and what makes a person brave? There are different answers for this. Firstly, there is a difference between being strong and being brave. Someone may go to the gym and lift a lot of weights and have big muscles, so they may be strong, but that does not necessarily make them brave. Maybe this big guy goes to the battlefield, and as soon as he sees the enemies attacking him, he runs away. Even though he's a strong person, that doesn't make him brave. Bravery and courage are different from being strong.

Types of Courage

We can look at courage in three ways. One type of courage is in the battlefield such that, when facing enemies like Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and his companions did on the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, we don't run away. Instead, we face death and remain steadfast in our fight.

The second type of courage is known as courage of character. This is when we want to do something, but know it will displease Allah (swt), so we have the courage not to do it. For example, we know we can eat pepperoni pizza at school and no one will see. But, we know it is against the rules of Allah (swt), so we stay far away from it. In this case, we have the courage of character. Saying no to something that you really feel like doing, just because you know Allah (swt) is displeased with it, is certainly a test of our character.

The third type of courage is related to intellect and wisdom. It is having the courage to speak the truth. It is knowing what is right and what is wrong, and not following what is wrong, even if many people are doing it. For example, on the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, there were many people in the army of Yazīd and, as a result, it was easy for someone to follow along. Yet, a person like Ḥurr may come forward and say, "Even though all of you are doing something wrong, I have the courage to think, and based on my knowledge and beliefs, I know that this is wrong. I'm going to stand up against what's wrong and join the truth by joining the camp of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)."

There is one extra special person we all know of who had courage on the battlefield, courage of character, and courage of speaking the truth and using his intellect: Abul Faḍl ʿAbbās. His mother's name was Fāṭimah Ummul Banīn, and he had three brothers, all of whom sacrificed their lives in Karbalā. Before we talk about the qualities of ʿAbbās, we must understand a very important concept in Islam which is mentioned more than 20 times in the Noble Qurʾān: balāʾ or the test of Allah (swt).

Tests in Islam

Allah (swt) is constantly testing us in life for various reasons. One reason is so we can see our position for ourselves. Imagine that you have a hot beverage. You're not sure if it's too hot to drink, so what do you do? You test a small bit to see if it's ready for you to drink or if you should wait a bit. Does Allah (swt) test us because He doesn't know what choices we will make? No, Allah (swt) knows everything, but it is we who do not know. By testing us, Allah (swt) gives us the opportunity to see the choices we make. Imagine someone says, "I think I'm very patient," and then they fall and get a small scratch on their knee. If they start screaming, we could say, "You thought you were patient, but look how you just reacted. You're not really that patient, are you?" This allows them to reflect on their actions and realize they may need to work on improving their patience.

One of the reasons for Allah's tests is to allow us to know more about ourselves and recognize our weaknesses. Each person reacts differently when they're tested by Allah (swt). Some exaggerate and make a big deal about everything.

Then, there's the second group of people who are patient, and when they are faced with a challenge in life, they don't complain. They act according to their intellect, not solely based on their anger or desire. They perform their responsibility when faced with trials

The third group are those who willingly go through hardships. The second group don't want hardships, but when it is brought upon them, they are patient. The third group, however, willingly takes on hardships and deals with them very well. It doesn't mean they go out of their way to make their lives difficult. Instead, it means when they see a hardship that Allah (swt) wants them to face, they do not shy away from it. For example, if their responsibility is to speak out against injustice, and they know this will cause them hardship, they don't run away. They perform their responsibility and take on that hardship for the sake of Allah (swt).

ʿAbbās falls into the third group. On the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, he willingly went and supported Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) when he knew that there were a lot of soldiers protecting the water, and that they wouldn't let anyone close to it. He had the courage to say, "I am going to go and bring water for the children, even though I have to face thousands of enemies." He took on that challenge with bravery, even though his martyrdom was extremely painful. As we say in the ziyārah of ʿAbbās:

فَنِعْمَ الصَّابِرُ الْمُجَاهِدُ الْمُحَامِی النَّاصِرُ وَ الْأَخُ الدَّافِعُ عَنْ أَخِیهِ الْمُجِیبُ إِلَی طَاعَةِ رَبِّهِ الرَّاغِبُ فِیمَا زَهِدَ فِیهِ غَیْرُهُ مِنَ الثَّوَابِ الْجَزِیلِ وَ الثَّنَاءِ الْجَمِیلِ

What an excellent example you were, of someone who was patient, persistent, protecting, helping, a brother who defended his brother, one who answered the call to worship his Lord, the one who longed for the reward and rank that most people stay away from.

Muṣībah:

Today is the second day the water supply has been cut off. It is very hot in Karbalāʾ. The children cannot sleep. How can they? They're very thirsty and hungry. The sound of al-ʿaṭash, al-ʿaṭash breaks Imām Ḥusayn's heart. What can he do? He is patient. For the sake of Allah (swt), he is bearing it all, but more is to come. Imām Ḥusayn's patience and sacrifice will be tested further with his brother, Abbās.

At the battle of Ṣiffīn, people saw Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) give a young boy of 12 or 13 years permission to fight. Although young, he was strong, tall, and handsome. Seeing he was just a boy, the enemies thought they could defeat him easily. Around 30 to 40 people volunteered to Muʿāwiyah to go fight him, and ʿAbbās defeated all of them. From that point on, ʿAbbās became known as the lion of the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa).

Because ʿAbbās was the most brave and courageous, he was appointed as the commander-in-chief and flag-bearer of Imām Ḥusayn's army. When the enemies attacked on the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, all the companions of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) were eager to get his permission to fight. ʿAbbās was the first to ask for permission. Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) told him, "No, you can't go. You are our flag bearer and the bravest among us. It's because of you that the children have courage and hope."

ʿAbbās waited while the other companions fought one by one, each becoming a shahīd. It was getting harder and harder for ʿAbbās to wait—he was eager to fight, to do anything to help Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)! When Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) saw ʿAbbās, he told him, "May my life be sacrificed for you, ʿAbbās!" This shows what high status ʿAbbās had in the eyes of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and Allah (swt).

Our 4th Imām (ʿa) has said, "Indeed, [my uncle] ʿAbbās will have such a high status on the Day of Judgment that all the other shuhadā will be in awe and want such a status."[1] Why? Because of his courage and dedication to Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa).

ʿAbbās finally came to Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and said, "O my master, there is no one left. My chest is heavy—I want to help and do something." Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) still did not give him permission and instead told him, "No, the children feel safe seeing you."ʿAbbās saw the children were very thirsty. For three days, there was no water in the camp of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). The army of Yazīd was spilling water on the ground in front of the children and feeding their animals water in front of them to make them more upset. ʿAbbās talked to the children and told them, "Let's go and ask Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). If he gives me permission, I will go get some water." Together, they went to Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa).

They all gathered around Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and said, "O Imām, please give ʿAbbās permission to get water for us." Seeing the thirst of the children, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) gave ʿAbbās permission to go.

ʿAbbās was happy to go. When he reached the river, he filled the container with water. He looked at the water and was about to drink some but stopped and threw it back in the river when he remembered his thirsty Imām (ʿa) and the children waiting for him. He dropped the water and said, "No! How can I, when my brother, my Imām is thirsty?!"

1 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār ul-Anwār*, Vol. 22, P. 274.

ʿAbbās began riding back to the tents. Maybe he was thinking, Finally, the children will get some water! Suddenly, a man ambushed ʿAbbās, cutting off his right arm. Ignoring the pain,ʿAbbās switched the water bag to his left arm. Again, the man struck, severing his left arm. ʿAbbās had lost both hands!

But how can I return to the tents empty-handed? he must have been thinking. How can I look upon the faces of those sweet children and have nothing to offer them? I must go on. He was a warrior, and the children were his heart. He was not going to stop until their thirst was quenched. ʿAbbās now held the water bag with his teeth, but the enemy knew no bounds. An arrow struck his mouth, piercing the water bag with it, and water and blood trickled onto the sands.

As the water drained from the water bag, the hopes of the thirsty children drained with it. Suddenly, an arrow was shot straight into the chest of ʿAbbās. A tragic cry rang through the skies of Karbalāʾ, "O brother! Find me!"

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) raced towards ʿAbbās' voice and saw a flag fallen on the desert sands, drenched in the blood of his flag-bearer. He rushed toward it and fell to his knees next to the broken body of his brother. Laying ʿAbbās' head in his lap, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) wiped the blood from his eye and face. The Imām (ʿa) held his brother so close to him, that the arrow that was planted in ʿAbbās' chest had also pierced a hole in Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa).

ʿAbbās was ashamed to go back to the children empty handed and asked that Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) leave him there. When Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) returned to the camp, the children came to him crying and said, "O Ḥusayn, O Imām, we won't ask for water anymore—we just want our uncle ʿAbbās back."

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) said, "O children, now you must be brave and prepare yourselves. Now that ʿAbbās is gone, nothing will stop the enemies from attacking you."

Assalāmu ʿalayka yā Abā ʿAbdillāh!

Lesson 8: Flag Bearer of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)

Objective: Children will learn about the story of ʿAbbās and his role in Karbalāʾ.

Every night during Muḥarram, we honor one martyr of Karbalāʾ. Different traditions remember different martyrs each night, and in some cultures, the 8th night is dedicated to commemorating the beloved, brave, and valiant brother and flag bearer of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), ʿAbbās.

In historical times, armies used flags to signify their identity and cause, and a flagbearer carried this significant symbol. ʿAbbās served as the flag bearer for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) at Karbalāʾ, and due to his pivotal role, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) didn't want him to fight in the battle. Instead, he entrusted him with the task of fetching water for their thirsty camp after Yazīd's army blocked access to the river. Despite his own thirst, when ʿAbbās reached the river, he didn't drink any water, remembering the thirst of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and the children. As he returned with his water bag filled, Yazīd's army ambushed him, severing his arms and piercing the water bag. ʿAbbās died bravely, devoted to his mission.

Each time we quench our thirst with water, we should remember the thirst of ʿAbbās, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), and his companions and say:

صَلَوَاةُ اللهِ عَلَى الْحُسَين وَ اَهْلَ الْبَيتِهِ وَ اَصْحَابِهِ وَ لَعْنَةُ اللهِ عَلَى الْقَاتِلِهِ وَ اَعْدَائِهِ

May the blessings of Allah be upon Ḥusayn (ʿa), his family, and his friends, and may Allah remove His mercy from the killers and enemies of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa)

Today, we'll create a craft to help us remember the thirst of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), ʿAbbās, and all their family and companions, as well as their strong faith and self control.

Water Bag of ʿAbbās

Suggested Ages: 5+

Time: 40 minutes

Materials:

- Water bag and arrows template
- Construction paper
- Crayons/colored pencils
- Scissors
- Glue

Procedure:

1. Color the pieces of the template however you like.
2. Cut out the pieces by cutting along the dotted lines.
3. Put the water bag in the middle of the construction paper and glue it down.
4. Next, position the arrows on the water bag as if they are piercing it. Glue them down securely.
5. Finish decorating the craft however you like.

Craft inspired by: Islam From the Start

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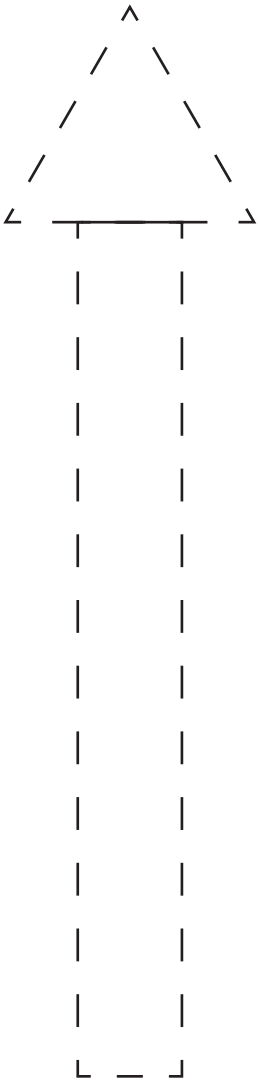

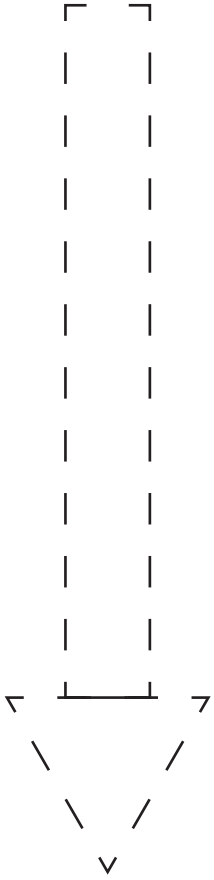

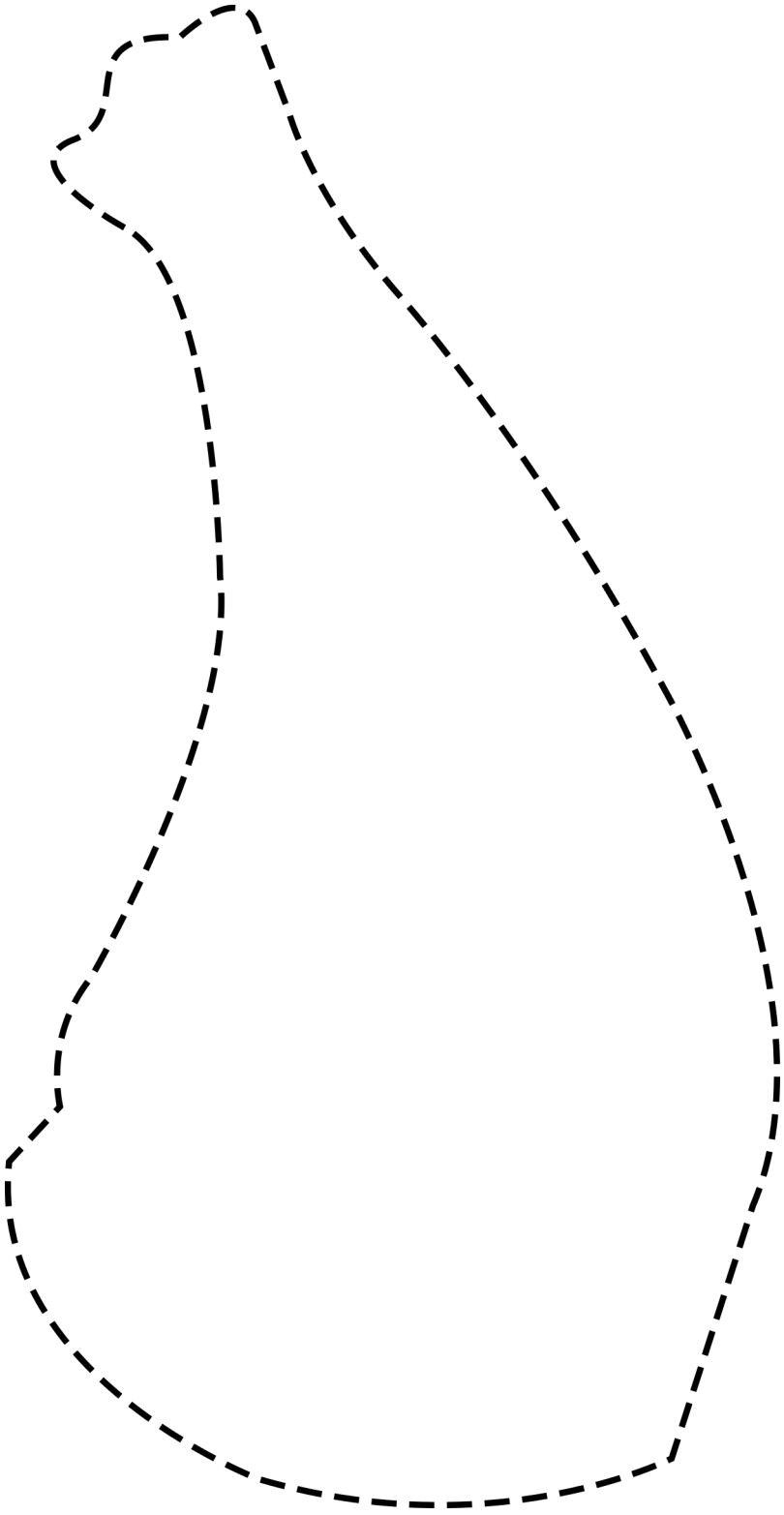

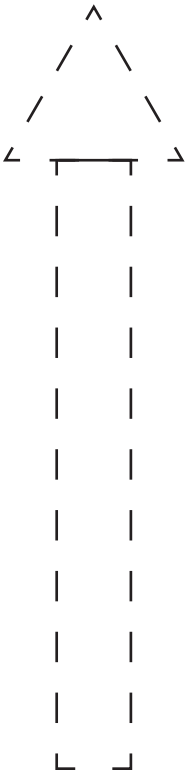

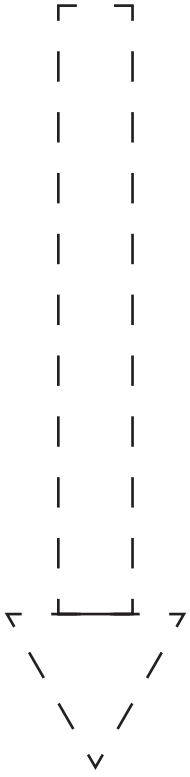

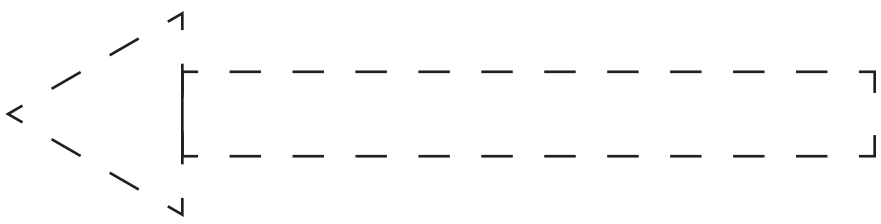

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Speech 9: Thankfulness

بِسمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ربِّ الْعَالَمينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلينَ اَبِى الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلى آلهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ اللَّه فِى الْاَرَضِين

Our topic for tonight is the concept of shukr or being thankful. Have you ever thought about how many blessings Allah (swt) has given us? If we want to make a list of all the blessings from Allah (swt), how long would that list be? It will take us a very long time to make such a list because there are so many blessings that we know of and remember and others that we're not even aware of or don't remember. When was the last time you opened your eyes and said, "Alḥamdulillāh! Thanks to Allah (swt) that my eyes are working today!" When was the last time you said, "O Allah, thank you for giving us the Noble Qurʾān and Ahlul Bayt (ʿa)?"

There are many blessings that Allah (swt) has given us that we take for granted and think they're always going to be there, but that is not the case. They may not always be there. If we think of all these blessings and we want to thank Allah (swt), how many times would we thank Him? 1,000 times? 10,000 times? 100,000? 1,000,000? 1,000,000,000, infinite?!

The daughter of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) taught us how to thank Allah (swt). Even after all the hardships she went through, she said, "All praise is to Allah as great as the amount of pebbles and sand that exist on this planet." We cannot even count them—that's how many times we should thank Allah (swt) for all of the great things He has given us!

There's a very beautiful supplication known as the supplication of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) on the day of ʿArafah, and in this duʿāʾ, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) thanks Allah (swt) for many things that we don't really pay attention to. He thanks Allah (swt) for the different parts of our body that help us breathe or hear, and even the different parts of our eye. Our eyes have many different parts, most of which we probably haven't even heard of. They have a cornea, pupil, iris, anterior chamber, posterior chamber, retina, optic disc, optic nerve, and retinal blood vessels. Wow! There are so many different parts working in our eyes, and if one of them doesn't work, we will stop seeing. Subḥānallāh, isn't that amazing? We should thank Allah (swt) for every single one of them. Did you know our eyes can see up to ten million different colors? Subḥānallāh! And this is just one eye—think about all the different things that we have in our bodies for which we should be thankful to Allah (swt).

Forms of Thankfulness

There are three ways to thank Allah (swt). One is to thank Him in our heart by saying something like, "O Allah, it is You who has given us this eye and we thank You for that." We can also be grateful with our tongues and by saying "Alḥamdulillāh" or "Shukranlillāh." The third way is to thank Allah (swt) with the different parts of our body by using our body parts in His way. To use our tongues to say good words, recite the Noble Qurʾān, and read duʿās. To not use our eyes to watch shows or movies that will take us away from His path. To use our hands to help others and not hurt them. That's the real meaning of being grateful. These are the three different ways of thanking Allah (swt). Ideally, we should combine all of these together, and we should have a feeling of gratitude in our hearts, be thanking Allah (swt) with our tongues, and use the blessings He has given us in ways that please Him at all times.

Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) advises us not to overlook even small blessings, saying, "When blessings come to you in small portions, do not drive them away by being ungrateful for them."[1] True gratitude means using blessings rightly and avoiding misuse. We pray to always be grateful for Allah's blessings and to avoid using them in ways that displease Him.

Muṣībah:

On the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) sacrificed all his faithful friends, but remained patient. He sacrificed his family, but he remained patient. How much can Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) bear? How much more can he sacrifice? My fellow friends, for the sake of Islam, our dear Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) sacrificed the most precious thing in his life, his own son ʿAlī al-Akbar. Tonight, we will cry and mourn more. Sayyidah Fāṭimah (ʿa) will cry with us. Imām ʿAlī (ʿa) will join us, Imām Ḥasan (ʿa) and Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) will cry along with us. Tonight is the night of the brave son and the life of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), the darling of Lady Zaynab. Tonight is the night of ʿAlī al-Akbar ibn Ḥusayn (ʿa).

Tonight, we will remember the loss of a son. But this son was not just an ordinary son. ʿAlī al-Akbar was somebody who was extremely special. We're told that when people used to long for the Prophet (ṣ), when they would miss Rasūlullāh (ṣ), they would look at ʿAlī al-Akbar who was an example of the Prophet (ṣ) in his speech, character, and his looks. Allah (swt) tells us in the Noble Qurʾān that our Prophet (ṣ) had the best of character. He was a mercy to the world and a bright lantern to humanity. ʿAlī al-Akbar had these same characteristics. He was somebody who was extremely good and pious. He was a light among the people. He was a great young man, and someone whom Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) loved very dearly.

We all know how much a parent loves their child. Most people live their lives, and their parents pass away before they do. But when a parent has to face the loss of a child before they do, it is extremely difficult for a heart to take.

1 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Sermon 193.

Let us take our hearts to this heartbreaking scene. It was the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, and one by one, the companions of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) gave their lives, showing their bravery on the battlefield. Not a single one hesitated to serve the Imām of their time. But the companions were numbered. Finally, it came to a point where there were no companions left. The Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) saw these acts of bravery one after another, but now their time had come to give their lives.

The first among them to say he wants to go to the battlefield was the son of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). ʿAlī al-Akbar asked his father for permission to go to the battlefield. We are told that Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) gave his son permission to go without any hesitation at all. But at the same time, as the father was watching his son turn away from him for maybe the last time, the eyes of our Imām (ʿa) filled with tears.

Why was our Imām (ʿa) crying? On one hand, he was content with the will of Allah (swt). He knew that he must sacrifice his son, and that his son must be sacrificed in front of his own eyes; but on the other hand, he was a father. This is a scene of contentment with the will of Allah (swt) and compassion for a very beloved son.

ʿAlī al-Akbar approached the battlefield. Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) cried out, "O Allah! Bear witness that there is a young man who is going forth who most resembles your Prophet in his looks, characteristics, and speech. Whenever we would wish to look to our prophet, we would look to him!"

ʿAlī al-Akbar faced the enemy army. He cried out, "I am ʿAlī, the son of Ḥusayn, the son of ʿAlī. We are, by Allah, more deserving of this right than anyone else. Do you not see how I protect my father?"

ʿAlī al-Akbar was on his horse, fighting the enemy army. It was one man against so many. ʿAlī al-Akbar fought so bravely and so strongly. But after some time, there was a strange scene, one which has not been seen all day in Karbalāʾ. The young man who was fighting suddenly returned back to his camp. Was he scared? Was he running away? God forbid that he would do such a thing! Was he thirsty and tired? No! This was ʿAlī al-Akbar. Brothers and sisters, if you had the chance to meet the Imam of your time before you died, wouldn't you do so? This is what ʿAlī al-Akbar wished to do. He came to his father one last time and said, "O Father, the weight of this armor is so heavy! And my thirst is killing me. If only there was some way to get some water!" Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) looked at his son. Imagine what a father would say to his son who is so thirsty, but he has no water to give. He said to him "O my son, be patient! Soon, you will meet your grandfather, who will give you a drink after which you will never be thirsty!"

After hearing this, ʿAlī al-Akbar was recharged. He returned to the battlefield and fought for some time. But there was one man named ibn Munqidh who was determined to kill the son of Ḥusayn (ʿa). He took aim with his spear, waiting for the right moment. He wanted to go down in history for being the first killer of the family of the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) on the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ. Alas, he threw his spear, and it hit ʿAlī al-Akbar, who was thrown off his horse.

ʿAlī al-Akbar cried out, "O my father, I send you my salām! I see my grandfather (that promise of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) has come true) he has quenched my thirst, and he is telling you to hurry and join us!"

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) watched this scene. He heard his son, but a whole army gathered around the body of ʿAlī al-Akbar. They knew who this young man was. They saw the Imām (ʿa) standing there, but O enemies, didn't you see that it was not just the Imām (ʿa) watching? There was a lady who also watched what was going on! Lady Zaynab came out and saw what happened to her nephew. O enemy, stop! Don't do that! How could you do this to this young man, who so resembled the Prophet (ṣ) that you claim to follow! Lady Zaynab cried out, "O my beloved one! O my nephew!"

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) went to the body of his son and put his cheek on the cheek of his son as he cried out, "O life! You are not worth living after this!"

Assalāmu ʿalayka yā Abā ʿAbdillāh!

Lesson 9: Being Grateful

Objective: Children will learn about being thankful to Allah (swt), and how thankfulness can increase our blessings.

We are thankful to Allah (swt) for this opportunity to gather once again to mourn Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). When we want to express gratitude for a blessing, we can say *shukranlillāh,* meaning "all thanks is for Allah (swt)", or *alḥamdulillāh*, which means "all praise is for Allah (swt)". Allah (swt) has bestowed countless blessings upon us, so it's important we show our appreciation to Him.

Imagine receiving a special gift that brings you immense joy. In response, we express our gratitude to the giver. Similarly, Allah (swt) blesses us every day, even every minute! Every breath we take, sustaining our lives, is a gift from Him. Interestingly, when we thank Allah (swt) for His blessings, He bestows upon us even more! The Noble Qurʾān states, "If you are grateful, I will give you more."[1] The Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) exemplified constant thankfulness and gratitude to Allah (swt). Imām as-Sajjād (ʿa) mentioned in one of his supplications that he had to thank Allah (swt) for granting him the ability to thank Him, recognizing that the ability to express gratitude is itself a blessing.

Even in his final moments, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) remained busy thanking Allah (swt). Despite the loss of his companions, relatives, and loved ones, he remained grateful to Allah (swt). As we learned previously, he expressed contentment and acceptance of Allah's will. InshāʾAllāh, we can all strive to attain this level of gratitude. To assist us in this journey, today we will do an activity to help us see what all we can be grateful to Allah (swt) for.

1 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah Ibrāhīm (14), Verse 7.

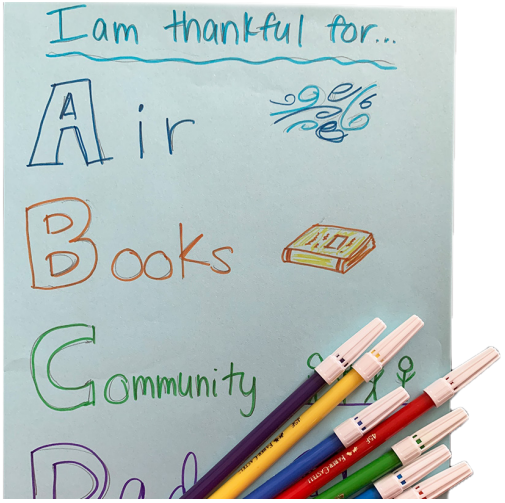
Thankful Alphabet

Suggested Ages: 5+

Time: 40 minutes

Materials:

- Paper
- Crayons/colored pencils
- Marker/pen



Procedure:

1. Think about all of the things you are thankful to Allah (swt) for.
2. Write them down in a list, starting with the letter A and going through the alphabet.
3. (For younger kids: You can write a shorter list using either the letters of your name or using the letters in the word “Allah.”)
4. Once your list is complete, decorate it with colors, stickers, or drawings to make it special.
5. Display your gratitude list in your room or any place where you can see it often, as a reminder of all the blessings you have to be thankful for.

Speech 10: Baṣīrah

بِسمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ربِّ الْعَالَمينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلينَ اَبِى الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلى آلهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ اللّه فِى الْاَرَضِين

We send our condolences to all the believers in the world, to all of you sitting here, and to the Imām of our time (ʿaj) for this sad occasion of the martyrdom anniversary of our beloved Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). The event of Karbalāʾ is a very tragic event because some of the best people that ever lived were martyred with thirsty lips. Tonight, we send our salāms to our master, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), Lady Zaynab, the flag bearer of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), Abul Faḍl ʿAbbās, and the children, companions, and family of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa).

The Shuhadā Had Baṣīrah

All martyrs of Karbalāʾ shared many great characteristics. One of these characteristics was baṣīrah, meaning the eye of insight. What is baṣīrah? Those of us who are fortunate to be blessed with healthy eyes can see the world around us, but we can only see things from the outside; we cannot see the inside. For example, when we look at the ocean, what do we see? We see the blue surface of water, but do we get to see everything that's inside it? No, we have to go inside the water and dive deep to see all the great things that exist in the oceans. The ocean water above a coral reef often looks plain and unremarkable. But if we are able to dive deep under its surface, we will see a world of astounding color and beauty.

The example of the ocean is just to understand what it means to have an eye of insight. There are things we can see, but seeing is different than understanding what's right and wrong, and what's true and false. The eye of insight helps us see things inside and it is with that baṣīrah, that eye of the heart, that we get to differentiate between right and wrong. Where does this understanding come from? Of course, it is guidance that is provided by the source of all right and truth, Allah (swt). Those who have strong belief in Allah (swt) and act on those beliefs are given the special blessing of baṣīrah. As our scholars have mentioned, baṣīrah is "a light within us with which we can see the inside of things."

Another example is if we go to a graveyard and look around, all we see are the stones on the graves. But the eye of the heart makes us think about death and how we have to face the consequences of our actions when our souls leave this world and enter another world. The eyes on our faces can read what is written on a gravestone, but the eye of the heart makes us think about how we have to make good choices now and prepare for the ākhirah. The eye of the heart makes us wonder how some doubt the existence of a Lord when it's so clear that our time in this world will expire and we will not take anything from this world into the grave.

That is the concept of baṣīrah, the eye of insight. The Noble Prophet (ṣ) said, "A person who cannot see with this eye is not blind; the real blind person is the one who cannot see with the eye of his heart, who does not have baṣīrah."[1]

The Eye of Baṣīrah

Those who have baṣīrah learn from everything around them. When we travel to different parts of the world, we see different cultures, but those with baṣīrah see so much more. They see Allah (swt) and His signs in everything and realize that this life and world cannot come from nowhere. Baṣīrah helps us understand that everything comes from one Creator who is in charge.

Many may ignore the cycle of green leaves on the trees, and how they change color in the fall, and then fall off in the winter, only to sprout up as green little leaves again in the spring because they are too distracted with other things. Others might think, "Oh wow, that's so cool!" But those who have baṣīrah look at this and think of the Day of Judgment. They think about the fact that our souls are not made for this world — they're made for eternal life in the hereafter, and that we're only in this world for a very short period of time. Just like leaves, Allah (swt) will wake us up to live another life after this one.

Who Has Baṣīrah?

People with baṣīrah are those who obey Allah (swt), always seek to learn the truth, and follow the teachings of the Qurʾān and Ahlul Bayt (ʿa). The martyrs of Karbalāʾ are a prime example of such individuals.

One of the greatest martyrs of Karbalāʾ known for his baṣīrah is ʿAbbās. Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa) said, "Our uncle ʿAbbās had great baṣīrah."[2] He used this baṣīrah on the night of ʿĀshūrāʾ when Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) spoke to his companions and told them that whoever stayed would be killed, so he granted them permission to leave. ʿAbbās, with great baṣīrah, stood up and said, "We will never leave you! How can we live after you? May Allah (swt) never bring a day that we are alive and you are not among us!" You see, he knew the value of the Imām (ʿa) because he had a true and deep understanding of his duties toward him, and would not let his Imām (ʿa) die before he sacrificed himself.

ʿAlī al-Akbar also had baṣīrah. When the caravan was getting closer and closer to Karbalāʾ, ʿAlī al-Akbar saw Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) walking and saying "Surely, we are from Allah and surely, we will return to Him."

ʿAlī al-Akbar asked his father, "Why are you saying this?"

At this time, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) told him they were soon going to reach Karbalāʾ, where they would all be killed. ʿAlī al-Akbar asked his father, "Are we not on the right path?"

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) said, "Yes, we are."

1 Muḥammad Rayshahrī, *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah*, Ch. 1.
2 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Tanfīḥ al-Mīqāl fī ʿIlm al-Rijā*l, Ch. 2, P. 70.

ʿAlī al-Akbar said, "Then we are not concerned about dying." He was happy to attain such martyrdom in the path of goodness and the truth because he had baṣīrah. He knew that as long as he died for the rightful truth, Allah (swt) would be pleased with him and he would have a high place in the hereafter.

Many people were martyred in the way of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) before ʿĀshūrāʾ, one of which was Qays. Qays was a messenger of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). He used to take the Imām's letters to the people of Kūfah. One day, Qays was arrested by the enemies. He knew that the enemies should not know what was written in the letter, so he put it in his mouth and swallowed it.

He was brought in front of Ibn Ziyād, who told him, "I will kill you unless you go to the minbar and curse Ḥusayn in front of everyone."

Qays, who had baṣīrah, thought for a second about what he could do to tell everyone about Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). Everyone had gathered in the masjid as Qays went on top of the minbar, but instead of saying bad things about Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), he began saying good things about the Imām (ʿa). Ibn Ziyād became furious and had Qays martyred.

However, the one with the most baṣīrah on the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ was Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). Imagine being in Karbalāʾ with 72 men and facing an army of thousands. Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) knew he could never win the battle, but it was not about winning or losing, it was about pleasing Allah (swt) and saving Islam. Only a person with baṣīrah could look at things that way. On this day, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) repeated how he was content with Allah's will. He didn't say, "Ok fine, Allah, I surrender to Your will." He said, "I am satisfied with Your will."

How is it possible that he was happy to see his six-month-old infant die in his arms? To see his young son, ʿAlī al-Akbar, cut into pieces? To see all his loved ones killed in front of his eyes? It was because he knew this was going to save Islam and please Allah (swt), and whatever pleases Allah (swt), pleases him. This is why Allah (swt) is also pleased with Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), his children, and his companions.

Muṣībah:

Tonight is the 10th night of Muḥarram, the eve of ʿĀshūrāʾ. It is a very tragic night, the last night on this earth for the 72 martyrs of Karbalāʾ, for brothers to be with their sisters, for fathers to be with their children, for mothers to be with their sons, for little Sakīnah to be with her baby brother, ʿAlī al-Aṣghar. Indeed this night is never to be forgotten. It is a night to shed more tears. Tonight, mothers are sitting with their children and they're preparing them to sacrifice their lives. Why? Because they know Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) is on the right path, the path to save Islam.

Tonight, if we walk near the tents in Imām Ḥusayn's camp, we'll hear his companions reciting Qurʾān, praying, and making duʿāʾ. They are preparing to sacrifice themselves tomorrow, discussing who should go first to protect Imām Ḥusayn's family and children.

In one tent, you can hear the cries of a baby, ʿAlī al-Aṣghar, the six-month-old son of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), who hasn't had anything to drink in a while. Perhaps his mother, Lady Rabāb, is singing him a soothing song to help him fall asleep. Tonight is the final night she will cradle ʿAlī al-Aṣghar in her arms.

The plains of Karbalāʾ reveal two contrasting sides of humanity: one side, embodied by Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), his companions, and the martyrs of Karbalāʾ, shows the beauty of humanity, demonstrating how individuals can exemplify virtue by sacrificing everything for Allah (swt). On the other side, represented by Yazīd's soldiers, we witness the depths of human evil. Some of these soldiers would read Qurʾān and pray, which might deceive those unaware of their true intentions.

However, the martyrdom of ʿAlī al-Aṣghar exposed the stark contrast between right and wrong. After the martyrdom of his companions, when Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) was left alone, Lady Rabāb pleaded with him, "ʿAlī al-Aṣghar is dying of thirst; can you give him some water?"

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) tenderly held ʿAlī al-Aṣghar in his arms and approached the enemies, appealing, "If you have no mercy on me, at least show mercy to this innocent child! He has done no harm to you; he only seeks a drop of water!"

Some of Yazīd's soldiers were moved to compassion, suggesting, "We should give water to the child." Others, however, insisted, "No, Ḥusayn, his family, and his camp must perish thirsty."

Fearing rebellion among his soldiers, ʿUmar ibn Saʿd ordered his top archer, Ḥarmala, to kill the child. Ḥarmala aimed at ʿAlī al-Aṣghar, who was in the arms Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). Shockingly, he used an arrow with three sharp heads, designed for hunting large animals. This act of cruelty highlights the immense tragedy of that fateful day in Karbalāʾ.

This is where the clear distinction between right and wrong, righteousness and evil, becomes apparent. If the soldiers of Yazīd were truly good people, they would never have harmed an infant. But tragically, an arrow with three sharp heads flew across the desert of Karbalāʾ, piercing the tender neck of ʿAlī al-Aṣghar and taking his innocent life instantly. Allāhu Akbar! Imagine the anguish of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) at that moment—instead of water, his beloved son received a fatal arrow.

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) returned to the tents with tears streaming down his face, and as some accounts tell, he tenderly buried his infant son with his own hands on the plains of Karbalāʾ. The martyrdom of ʿAlī al-Aṣghar exposed the true cruelty of Yazīd's soldiers, who showed no mercy even towards a helpless infant. It is a deeply sorrowful tale, and we pray to Allah (swt) to soften our hearts so that we may feel the pain and shed tears over this tragedy.

Remember, this is an important lesson for all: no matter how young you are, all have the potential to help the Imām (ʿa). ʿAlī al-Aṣghar is a reminder for all of us to always be on the path of righteousness, no matter how young or old.

Assalāmu ʿalayka yā Abā ʿAbdillāh!

Lesson 10: Having Insight

Objective: Children will learn about being insightful and having baṣīrah.

On the eve of ʿĀshūrāʾ, the caravan was immersed in prayer and worship. Aware that this was their final night on earth, they devoted it to expressing gratitude to Allah, seeking forgiveness, and seeking His guidance. In stark contrast, Yazīd's army was engaged in revelry and indulging in forbidden actions. What set Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and his followers apart was baṣīrah.

Baṣīrah or insight, meaning to tell the difference between good and bad which helps us make good choices. Someone with baṣīrah is someone who listens and ponders. They think and take time to understand the situation before they act, and don't automatically believe something without having the full information. Secondly, someone with baṣīrah looks at each situation carefully. They don't do something because everyone else is doing it. They first determine if they should get involved or not.

A person with baṣīrah also takes lessons from history. When we study history, we can learn from the mistakes people made, and how to make good choices. One famous scholar has said that our mothers tell us stories at night to put us to sleep, but the Noble Qurʾān tells us stories to wake us up! When we read the stories in the Noble Qurʾān about the Prophets (ʿa), we should try to take lessons from these stories and apply them to our own lives. Lastly, someone with baṣīrah follows Allah's rules and stays away from what He has made ḥarām. Today, we will make a craft that will remind us about the importance of having baṣīrah and to always look at things carefully.

Eyes of Baṣīrah

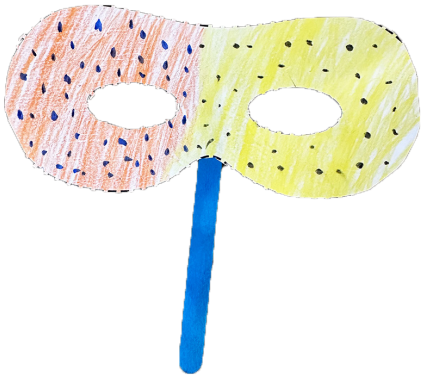
Suggested Ages: 5+

Time: 40 minutes

Materials:

- Mask template
- Crayons/colored pencils
- Marker/pen
- Scissors
- Glue/tape
- String/yarn (preferably stretchy)
- Optional: popsicle stick or pencil

Procedure:



1. Color and decorate the mask template however you like.
2. Cut out the mask by cutting along the outer dotted lines.
3. Carefully cut out the circles in the middle to make eye holes in the mask.
4. Glue or tape a piece of string or yarn to either side of the mask so that it can be tied on the head (optional: you can glue or tape a popsicle stick or pencil to the mask so that it can be held over the face instead).

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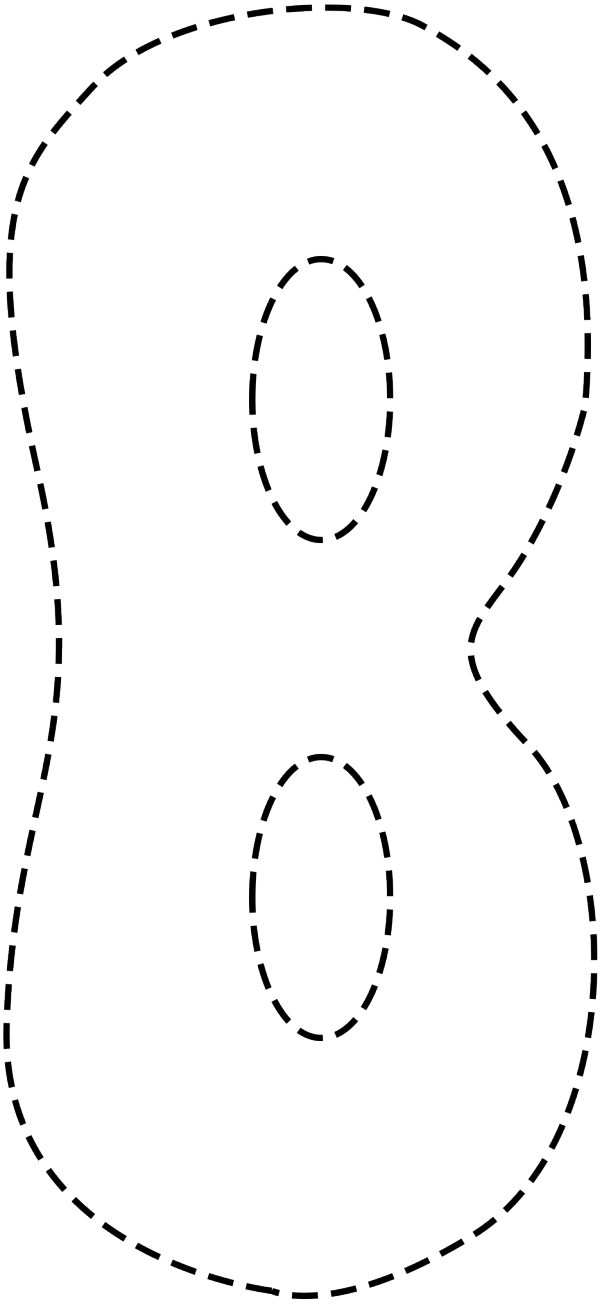

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Speech 11: Ikhlāṣ

بِسمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيم

وَالْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ربِّ الْعَالَمينَ وَالصَّلاةُ وَالسَّلامُ عَلى أَشْرَفِ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَالْمُرْسَلينَ اَبِى الْقَاسِمِ مُحَمَّد وَعَلى آلهِ الطَّيِّبِينَ الطَّاهِرِينَ سِيَّمَا بَقِيَّةُ اللَّه فِى الْاَرَضِين

We thank Allah (swt) for giving us the opportunity to come together for one more night to remember the shuhadā of Karbalāʾ. We remember the many lessons they have taught us, and try to apply these lessons in our lives to become better Muslims.

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) had many family members and companions who joined him in Karbalāʾ and dedicated their lives for him. If we look closely, we can learn a lot from them. One of these very dedicated family members was the brother of Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), ʿAbbās.

Imām Zaynul ʿĀbidīn (ʿa) said, "May Allah have mercy upon my uncle, ʿAbbās. He put his brother before himself; he did well, and sacrificed himself for his brother until he lost his two hands for this sake. This is why instead of his two hands, Allah will give him two wings with which he will fly with the angels in Paradise, just like Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib [the uncle of the Prophet (ṣ)]. ʿAbbās holds a special position in the eyes of Allah, one which all the martyrs will wish they had on the day of Qiyāmah."[1]

From this ḥadīth, we can see that the position of ʿAbbās is so high that all the martyrs will hope and wish they could have his status on the Day of Qiyāmah. Many sacrificed their lives for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) on the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, but they did not become ʿAbbās. So what makes him so great in the eyes of Allah (swt)?

You see, ʿAbbās had many qualities that made him great. For example, he had excellent akhlāq. He was completely obedient to Allah (swt) and to his Imām and brother, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa). He also had great knowledge of Allah (swt) and Islam. But there is one special quality of ʿAbbās that is a mystery and a secret between him and Allah (swt): his ikhlāṣ, or sincerity. Having ikhlāṣ means that your intention is pure and your actions are only to make Allah (swt) happy, not to show off or make others happy.

We learn from the Ahlul Bayt (ʿa) that your intention—the reason why you're doing something—is more important than the action itself. It doesn't matter if someone is the president of the masjid or a volunteer who helps clean the restrooms, one is not better than the other. It is the intention behind it that matters. As long as the intention is for the sake of Allah (swt), you will get more rewards. One day, Imām aṣ-Ṣādiq (ʿa) was explaining the meaning of the second verse of Sūrah al-Mulk:

الَّذِى خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed.[2]

1 Shaykh Ṣadūq, *Al-Khiṣāl*, Vol. 1, P. 68, Ḥadīth #101.
2 Noble Qurʾān, Sūrah al-Mulk (67), Verse 2.

The Imām (ʿa) explained, "This verse doesn't mean that the best person is the one who does more deeds, but the one who performs the best actions, and the best action is that in which one's heart is filled with love and awe of Allah, and where you are doing the action with the best of intentions and for the best reason."[3]

Therefore, having sincerity in our intentions is one of the keys to having the best actions, and this makes us have the most value in the eyes of Allah (swt).

Definition of Ikhlāṣ

Having ikhlāṣ means having a pure intention, but what does this actually mean? We see in our ḥadīth that the Noble Prophet (ṣ) said, "If you perform an action, do it sincerely for the sake of Allah because He only accepts from His servants those actions that have been performed sincerely."[4]

This means that we perform our acts of worship purely for Allah (swt), and not for anyone else. We shouldn't perform our actions to show off or for people to say good things about us. We should constantly ask ourselves, "Why am I doing this? Is my intention pure?" Whenever we are about to do a good deed, such as giving charity or volunteering, we must check our intentions. Nowadays, a lot of people post pictures or videos of themselves performing good actions on social media. This can have a really bad impact on our ikhlāṣ, because we may focus more on how many "likes" or "views" we get, rather than why we are performing this action.

Additionally, sometimes we do an act of worship out of habit, just to get it done. This is another example of lack of ikhlāṣ because we are doing it for ourselves, not for Allah (swt).

Practicing Ikhlāṣ

Inshāʾ Allāh in these nights, we can work on practicing ikhlāṣ and purifying our intentions. In order to do this, a few steps we can take are:

1) Reflect

The first step to practicing ikhlāṣ is to reflect on ourselves and see if our actions are purely for Allah (swt) by asking ourselves why we them.

For example, when we help around the house, do we want people to know we're helping? If we don't get a "Thank you" or no one finds out that we're the one who helped, do we become upset? Or are we happy knowing that Allah (swt) is the only one who saw our good deed? Were we doing it only because our mom and dad told us to? Or is it because we know that helping a believer is one of the best deeds that is pleasing to Allah (swt), and being helpful and good to our parents is so important? Do we try to help even when people don't ask? Asking these questions will help us assess if our intentions are for Allah (swt) or others.

3 Shaykh Kulaynī, *Al-Kāfī*, Vol. 2, Chapter on Ikhlāṣ, Ḥadīth #4.
4 Rayshahrī, Muḥammad, *Mīzān al-Ḥikmah*, Ḥadīth #3819.

2) Never wish to impress people

There is a part of our soul called our nafs. Our nafs wants to be recognized and have others pay attention to it, tempting us to become more religious so that our community can like us more. Instead of doing good deeds for Allah (swt), we do them for others. We need to be careful and watch over our nafs the same way a nurse always checks on his or her patients. It's ok if someone encourages us or acknowledges our actions, but we should not do a deed solely for praise. Our main intention shouldn't be showing off or looking to impress others.

Politicians often get involved in politics because being in the spotlight makes them happy. Even if we are taking on leadership positions, we should be very careful to do so out of a sense of responsibility, to help the cause of Ahlul Bayt (ʿa), and to use the talents Allah (swt) has given us, not to be in the spotlight because we like that feeling.

3) Doing difficult actions

One way we can increase our ikhlāṣ is by performing difficult actions. Often, these are those actions that neither we, nor others, want to do.

Sometimes the most sincere action is the most difficult. Prophet Muhammad (ṣ) has said, "The best of deeds is the most difficult of them."[5]

So, having ikhlāṣ means being sincere and having pure intentions. Ikhlāṣ is what makes the quality of our actions higher. The better our actions are, the better they become vehicles for getting closer to Allah (swt).

Muṣībah:

Today is the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, a day full of tragedy. What shall we recite today? Which tragedy shall we remember today? So much suffering, sacrifice, and patience. Who shall we cry for today? My friends, if we do not cry today, when else would we cry? Today is dedicated to the master of all the martyrs that ever lived, the son of Fāṭimah az-Zahrāʾ (ʿa), the grandson of Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā (ṣ), the light of the eyes of ʿAlī al-Murtaḍa (ʿa), Abā ʿAbdillāh (ʿa).

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) saw so much tragedy and suffering today when his companions went to the battlefield one-by-one and were martyred. ʿAlī al-Akbar, ʿAun and Muḥammad, Qāsim, and Abul Faḍl ʿAbbās were all martyred. Even 6-month-old ʿAlī al-Aṣghar was martyred!

And now, Ḥusayn (ʿa) was all alone, thirsty, tired, heartbroken, but he kept on. Imām Ḥusayn's only concern was saving Islam for all of us. It was time for Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) to go to the battlefield, and say farewell to his beloved family. What a sad farewell! All the women were crying because the Imām (ʿa) of their time, the grandson of their Prophet (ṣ), was about to go to the battlefield and fight with thousands of enemies.

5 ʿAllāmah Majlisī, *Biḥār ul-Anwār*, Vol. 70, P. 191.

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) began saying farewell to his family, to all the women and children. Finally, he got on his horse and went towards the battlefield. Suddenly, his horse stopped. What a tragic scene! Take your hearts to Karbalāʾ and picture this. He looked down and saw his young daughter holding the feet of the horse. She might have said, "Baba, can you come off the horse?"

Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) loved his daughter Sakīnah, so he comes off the horse. Sakīnah said, "Baba, Uncle ʿAbbās and my brother, ʿAlī al-Akbar, went to the battlefield and didn't come back. What will happen to me if you go to the battlefield and don't come back?"

The Imām (ʿa) replied, "My darling, Sakīnah, do not cry, my love. Do not burn the heart of your father." He gave Sakīnah one last hug and headed for the battlefield. It was not easy, but he knew that this was what Allah (swt) wanted. Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) was brave and strong. After all, he was the son of Imām ʿAlī (ʿa). He fought with great might, even though he didn't have water, and he killed some of Yazīd's best warriors. Our great Imām (ʿa) fought like a lion, pushing back the enemy army. The enemies realized that they couldn't fight Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), so like cowards, they surrounded him and shot arrows at him from all directions.

It is very difficult to describe exactly how Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) was martyred, because he was killed so brutally. Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) was martyred by one of the worst people that ever lived, Shimr. Shimr didn't have any good actions, let alone having ikhlāṣ. He only cared about this world. On the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ, he became the killer of our master, Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa), while Lady Zaynab watched from a hilltop.

Today we say, "Labbayk Ya Ḥusayn!" We say, "Ya Ḥusayn, we were not there on the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ in Karbalāʾ to help you, when you called for help and nobody answered you. But after 1400 years, we answer you! We answer your call, and we say 'Labbayk Ya Ḥusayn!'" InshāʾAllāh when the Imām of our time, Imām al-Mahdī (ʿaj) returns, we will answer his call and help him. Brothers and sisters, let's sincerely try to improve ourselves and have ikhlāṣ to be amongst our Imām's sincere followers. Now, all of you say this with me, "Labbayk Ya Ḥusayn! Labbayk Ya Ḥusayn! Labbayk Ya Ḥusayn! Labbayk Ya Mahdī! Labbayk Ya Mahdī! Labbayk Ya Mahdī!"

Assalāmu ʿalayka yā Abā ʿAbdillāh!

Lesson 11: Martyrs of Karbalāʾ

Objective: Children will reflect upon the sacrifices of one of the shuhadā of Karbalāʾ.

During the past 10 nights, we talked about the brave martyrs of Karbalāʾ and the special qualities they had. We want to learn from them so we can be like Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and the Imām of our time (ʿaj). If we don't try to be like them, these gatherings and mourning become just something we do because it's tradition, not because we truly understand.

We should ask ourselves, if we lived when Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) was alive, would we stand with him? If our 12th Imām (ʿaj) called us today, would we hesitate? Or would we be like the companions who stayed with their Imām until the end?

The day of ʿĀshūrāʾ is very sad in the Islamic year. It's when Imām Ḥusayn (ʿa) and his family and friends sacrificed their lives. On this day, we remember all the martyrs of Karbalāʾ. Let's take a moment to think about them. They gave their lives so we could practice Islam, know the truth, and make good choices. We should be thankful to these brave people. Today, we'll do an activity to remember some of the martyrs of Karbalāʾ.

Matching Activity

Suggested Ages: 5+

Time: 30 minutes

Materials:

- Matching template
- Crayons/colored pencils
- Marker/pen
- Scissors
- Glue

Procedure:

1. Color the pictures on the second page of the template.
2. Cut out the pictures by cutting along the dotted lines.
3. Look at the names of the martyrs listed on the first page and think back on their part in Karbalāʾ.
4. Match each picture with the names and glue it in the box.
5. For older kids: after gluing the pictures, write the connection between each person and the picture associated with them.

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Martyrs of Karbalā’

Imām Ḥusayn (‘a)	
‘Abbās	
‘Alī al-Akbar	
Qāsim	
‘Alī al-Aṣghar	

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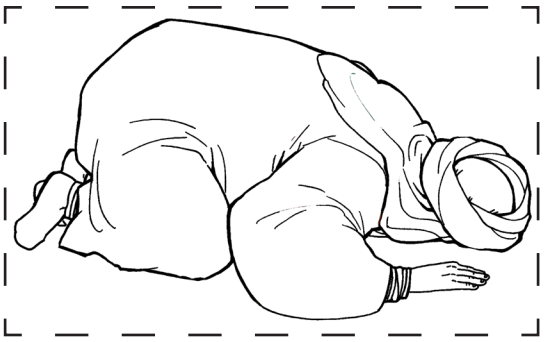
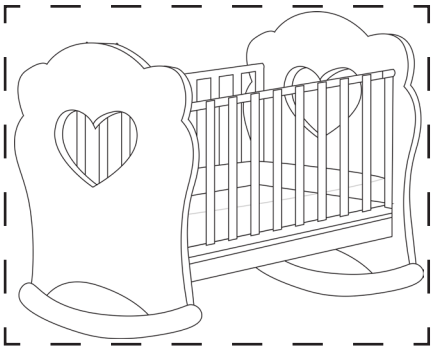


Allāhu
Akbar!



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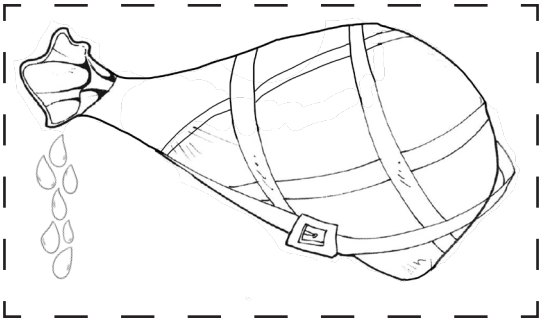

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